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# Standing in the Street

by

Colin Morton

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1979

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled ..............................

............... Standing in the Street ..............................

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Date Oct 10, 1979 ........

for Mary Lee

# ABSTRACT

Barry MacDonald, the protagonist of this novel, is a student journalist at a small western Canadian college. Having grown to maturity in an age of instant electronic communication, he feels directly involved in, not peripheral to, the historically important events of his time. His attention to global problems, however, leads him to neglect the divisive forces within his co-operative house, and unconsciously to avoid intimacy with the woman who loves him.

Although Barry's identification with the peace movement is rooted in his personal experience as the son of a war veteran, his protest is expressed in borrowed symbolic terms. Similarly, the intelligence agents set to observe him go to considerable lengths to fit his peripheral activities into a model imported from the centres of action.

In a letter to a friend, Barry describes his political and personal isolation: "I've been sitting on the sidelines all my life, taking the long view, seeing the world reduced to the size of a TV screen." Having understood this problem, Barry takes the first steps to close the distance between himself and his father, and to attune his actions to the needs of his own community. But with the woman from whom he has begun to learn about himself, he still cannot reach a complete understanding. The conclusion of the novel offers only the promise that he will express his new knowledge in action.

# Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professors Greg Hollingshead and Rudy Wiebe for their many valuable editorial comments and suggestions.

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# SOMETHING IS HAPPENING

Hastily, Barry places three stacks of mimeographed paper on the curb and begins to collate, forming a new criss-cross stack which grows as the others dwindle.

Blue paper: History of the Indo-China War since 1946.

White paper, slightly smudged toward the bottom: Seven-Point Program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Pink paper: Canadian Inputs to American Aggression.

He has enough handouts for the largest demonstration ever held between the Great Lakes and the Rockies. But, with the big stores closed for the holiday, there is almost no one on the street to read them, except two policemen, and a pair of ladies, one old the other young, wearing nearly identical cloth coats, who give him one of their _Watchtowers_. Where are all the big talkers? Do they think the bomber crews slept in because it is Remembrance Day? Where is Zak with his flags and pickets, his pipe and drum? Where are Mrs. MacIntyre and her Earnest Ladies? If the Co-op doesn't turn out _en masse_ . . .

The size of the protest, though, isn't the most important thing. Two, two hundred, two hundred thousand; the message is the same, and still the war makers won't hear it over the sound of all their bombs. Anti-personnel bombs. Bacteriological bombs. Defoliation bombs. Weather bombs. Laser bombs. Smart bombs. Insane bombs. Deafened by their bombs, the war makers hear no one yelling NO! in the streets of New York or Toronto or London or Berlin or Tokyo or Calgary. They go on drawing their game plans in blood. But we, the witnesses, how can we keep silent? Not to revolt would make us accomplices.

The arches of the Bay colonnade and the facing block of brick and sandstone buildings are uncommonly deserted this morning, naked without their workday throngs, intimate as if it were early morning, when a whistle a block away sounds closer, not smothered in a crowd. The clock in front of the bank keeps a precise accounting of the cold minutes Barry stands on the sidewalk, just as he stood on this same corner, over two years ago, before the first downtown demonstration. He had similar anxieties that morning--what if nobody comes?--even more painful because, in his freshman naïveté, he expected the protest to have some immediate results. But at least then he had Tom with him, taking pictures and cracking jokes, assuring him that however crazy the demonstration was, at least he wasn't the only lunatic. Today Barry can't even be sure of that. Tom is on the other side of the Atlantic, and Barry's two years of persistence haven't stopped a single bomb from falling.

A trolley bus, almost empty, wheezes and heaves its lumpish green body past the bank corner and stops. When it lumbers away again, Barry sees Gloria on the curb, a large sheet of poster paper under one arm. He waves the two-fingered peace sign as she strides confidently across the street toward him. Since she left the Co-op so suddenly last night, Barry has worried that something he said might have upset her, or that she thought he was playing the fool. But now as she comes toward him, her round face breaks into a smile, and the affection in her eyes reassures him that he had no reason to worry.

"Comrade!" he cries, taking her hands in his and kissing both her cheeks. Gloria laughs, kissing his cheeks in turn and, freeing her hands holds up her poster, which says in large black letters,

MAKE LOVE NOT WAR.

"Hardly original," Barry comments, "but the sentiment I like. And it'll show up clearly for the cameras."

"If there are any," Gloria says, and looks up the mall. She sighs with exaggerated disappointment that makes Barry smile, seeing in her the naive hope he has been trying to keep alive in himself for two frustrating years.

The mall, though, is no longer utterly deserted. Mrs. MacIntyre comes marching up the colonnade in her fur coat, some of her Women for Peace behind her; and a few students have arrived with red felt poppies stuck in their ski jackets. Gloria is explaining to Barry that she has found someone to play the trumpet during the rally, when Sid Hansen pushes Barry's shoulder, dumps a pile of handouts into his arms, and tells him--as if it's Sid's demonstration--to distribute them.

A week ago Sid swore this rally would never take place. 'You can't have a common front with that bunch of liberals!' he shouted across the Bow College newspaper office. 'The revolution doesn't need a ladies' aid.' Yet here he is, cigar sticking out of his face under a Ché Guevara-style beret, giving orders, sending Barry east while he goes west up the mall with an armload of the leaflets for which he, as newspaper editor, supplied most of the information.

Barry's hands soon grow numb from the cold as he hands out the papers to newcomers, and he pulls down the sleeves of his sweater.

The wind is winter-born. If not today, then before long it will deliver a payload of snow on the city. Strands of dark grey cloud like smoke from artillery fire rush past the Husky Tower's gigantic finger of concrete. Barry pulls his cardigan closed at the neck, but the wind cuts through his three layers of wool. It is one thing to demonstrate in Berkeley, but in this weather it takes real dedication.

His hands stiffening, he begins tucking the papers he can't give away into the doorhandles of shops. He would like to put one in every door in the city, so nobody can claim to be ignorant.

"You got a permit to distribute these things?" The young policeman holds the colored pages in front of him.

Barry nods. "This is a legal demonstration."

The cop smirks and stands closer to Barry as if to tell a joke. They are about the same age. Three years ago they might have lined up on opposing teams in a high school basketball game. "You really believe this stuff?" The cop actually seems curious. "I mean, the U.S. pours a lot of money into this province."

Barry shrugs. "I'm trying to keep an open mind." He would like to tell the cop what the province gives for that money, but this morning he must avoid arguments above all else.

The policeman draws a notebook from inside his blue parka and writes down Barry's name and address, while Barry stands at his shoulder, watching their distorted reflection in the display window of a store. "If I find one of those pieces of paper lying around this afternoon, I'll nail you for littering, understand?"

"You can't do that!" yells Sid, arriving at Barry's elbow. "Do you charge the Bay every time you find one of their bags on the ground?"

"Never mind." Barry takes Sid's arm, but is shaken off angrily. A second officer has arrived, and the two cops huddle over a small book of by-laws. Backing Sid into the middle of the mall, Barry tells him, "Let's make it as easy for them as we can. They're not looking for trouble."

"Bullshit!" Sid yells. "Littering!"

"Cool it!"

Sid takes the chewed-up cigar butt out of his mouth, and, spitting a shred of tobacco from his tongue, flips the butt toward the cops. Fortunately, it lands short of them and they don't notice. Closing their book and casting warning glances at Sid and Barry, they turn their attention to the gathering crowd on the mall.

A thicket of posters and banners has sprung up in front of the Bay. Barry thinks he catches sight of Gloria, but when she turns he sees it is someone else, with a similar red bandana tied around her head. Behind her, a head taller than anyone around him, Zak is swaggering about in knee-high leather boots, a peaked hat and a long blue coat borrowed from the set of She Stoops to Conquer at the College: his idea of an American revolutionary uniform. He carries a canvas bag of slats and a staple gun, with which he is making more and more pickets from the posters people have brought. His Committee to Aid Draft Resisters (CADRE) has turned out in greater numbers than ever before, and occupies the whole front of the mall's concrete stage. As Barry watches, Zak pulls from his sack the clothesline pulleys and rope from which the flags are to be flown, and begins hooking them to one of the light standards.

The flag lowering is the only one of Barry's original plans that has been cleared by City Hall and police. What he thought most important--to have the demonstration at Central Park alongside the official cenotaph ceremony--was vetoed out of hand. So now, downtown where demonstrations have traditionally been held, it will be easier for the CADREs to turn it from an anti-war to an anti-American rally.

When Barry returns to the stage area Mrs. MacIntyre, followed by a group of ladies, comes over to him and shakes a clutch of papers in his face. "Barry! I'm sure this isn't your idea!" She holds out the back of the pink sheet: a cartoon of the Foreign Affairs minister completing a circular statement about Canada's neutral role on the I.C.C. by sticking one thumb in his mouth and the other up his ass. "Surely you don't expect us to endorse this?"

Backing away, Barry steps onto the toes of a lady who has crowded in behind him. "Haven't they any respect?" she shrieks. Barry has no ready answers, yet Mrs. MacIntyre will not let him pass without an explanation.

Her next words are drowned out by a loud chant from the front of the stage--PEACE PEACE PEACE PEACE--that sounds like a football team doing calisthenics. The CADREs, in khaki coats, red-ink-soaked bandages about their heads, bells and beads jangling, dance back and forth bobbing their pickets up and down and waving peace signs and clenched fists.

"They're Americans," Barry tells Mrs. MacIntyre, who has turned to watch in indignation. "Their lives are on the line. Of course they feel strongly." He needn't tell her, at this moment, that he feels just as strongly about Canadian hypocrisy and profiteering.

Somewhere in the crowd the quarterback calls a signal and the chant turns to HELL NO WE WON'T GO. The chanters are trolls of the gridiron, bewitching Coach Nixon's game plan. Barry smiles at a prancing apeman in denim overalls--the one everyone calls Smoky--who is as tall and broad as Smoky Bear, and whose reddish hair blows about in all directions. Over his shoulder he carries a cartoon-poster: the Statue of Liberty, torch hand broken off, lying flat on her back being raped by a rocket, and crushing the struggling masses under her. Behind the stage, Zak is unfurling the flags of the United States, Vietnam, and Canada. Their pulleys rattle against the light standard in the stiffening wind.

Barry glances at his watch and tries to move to the back of the stage, but the ladies won't let him pass. Finally, help arrives out of the crowd. Gloria pushes her way toward him, leading by the arm a thin boy who is working up and down the three stops of a trumpet.

"Barry," she calls, "here's the musician. Remember? I told you he'd play taps for the ceremony."

The ladies back away reluctantly as Barry shakes the boy's hand and leads him toward the stage. Mrs. MacIntyre is still grumbling, but at least a confrontation has been postponed. It is time for Barry to act, and Gloria is at his side.

The chanting of the CADREs quickens, then stops abruptly. There is an expectant buzz between the two canyon walls of brick and stone.

All is in readiness. Professor Humboldt is waiting to give his speech, talking to two of his students and chain-smoking cigarettes. Reverend Cameron, chairman of Calgarians Against the War, and the first speaker, stands by the stage beating his arms against the sides of his dark tweed coat to keep warm.

"Good morning Barry! Your boys and girls are out in force, I'm glad to see." Cameron must have seen the handouts that outrage Mrs. MacIntyre, yet he is as friendly and cheerful as ever. He and Barry check their watches and agree it is time to begin. "What would you say, Barry," Cameron asks, scanning the crowd, "if you could phone President Nixon right now?"

Barry smiles, thinking it might be easier to put a call through to God. "I know what they'd say." He nods toward the shouting picketers.

The Reverend laughs, the white breath billowing around his face the same color as his hair. "He's promised peace, remember." Cameron moves to the stairs at the back of the stage. "We can't let him forget it."

Then Barry is on the platform, and at his feet are the raucous cheers, angry bearded faces, encouraging smiles of friends, curious faces of people who might one day be friends. They are a small knot of protesters, fitting snugly into one corner of the mall, yet so protestant that they are split into half a dozen factions. He switches on the microphone, then noisily moves it to face some of the newcomers instead of the pickets. A rush of excitement rises through him and he shivers with an exaggerated movement of his shoulders.

"I tell you, we have to stop meeting like this!" Appreciative laughter ripples through the crowd. "Let's end this war soon, before we all catch cold." A low roar of agreement. Glancing at the clock on the bank corner which gives him less than ten minutes till eleven, he hastily introduces Reverend Cameron and retreats to the pavement.

Cameron claps him on the shoulder as they pass on the stairs, and goes right into his speech, addressing the young Americans directly. He draws a parallel between their situation and the dilemma facing Jews in Christ's time: whether to submit to an unjust authority. "We're told that when the people were on the point of rebellion Christ told them, Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's. But clearly--and you lads understand this--when Caesar demands your soul, that you must not render." His voice booms over the street with as much confidence as if he were behind his own pulpit, and the listeners respond with respect.

Barry clenches his fists when he hears the phrase, Render unto Caesar. His father used to repeat those words whenever they argued about 'the war', that is, the war against Hitler; the 'good war', his father called it, because he fought in it and it 'pulled this country out of the depression'. They could be terrible arguments, especially when his father was drinking, and Barry still can't reason when he hears those words. The reverend drones on, invoking brotherly love and the Prince of Peace, but, standing behind the loudspeaker, Barry misses some of the words and doesn't follow the speech.

He watches Gloria standing beside him with her mitts over her ears, and gradually the tension in him is released. She herself is full of contrasts--the soft lines of her face with her scuffed hiking boots, her faded jeans with her colorful handbag and bandana--but somehow she reconciles them all. When she looks up at him and slips her hand into his he knows, whatever made her leave last night, that nothing has come between them. But for the first time he admits to himself how much he will be hurt when something does.

The bells of a downtown church mark the hour, and Cameron's voice breaks off abruptly. "Now in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, let us join in two minutes' silent prayer."

After the inevitable coughs and cleared throats, a silence descends, in which the low rumble of city traffic grows to fill the vacuum. Two minutes of solitude in this crowd, each person alone with his or her fears, war fantasies, memories, illusions of security. Alone with the beat of eardrums and the echoing hum of peacetime traffic. It is the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month. Why not eleven minutes' silence? Unbearable! He can hardly bear to think of the undeclared war in South-East Asia, and of the thousands of lives sacrificed senselessly for a President's non-existent honor. It is obvious the war can't be won, isn't worth winning, only serves the interests of someone's profit. Yet the Pentagon experts who call down fire at a distance of ten thousand miles won't see it.

Barry's mind slips back to earlier Remembrance Days, to school ceremonies when the two minutes ended in giggling, to his father in uniform highstepping around the kitchen and saluting his Legion buddies. Then he thinks of the last war, the atomic one; of how the world has learned to live with it, to believe in overkill as the way to keep peace; of how in the name of war, reason is suspended. He wonders if a country slips into war the way a person slips into love, a second, third and fourth time, long after he should know better, or out of some deep urge to self-destruct.

At last the two minutes are over. They seemed like eleven. Gloria stands aside for the young musician, who steps up onto the stage. As the three flags are lowered, he lifts the trumpet to his lips and plays. The horn echoes from the walls of the buildings in a drawn-out cry that seems to be coming from everywhere at once.

Now Barry is back on stage, and he says more than he intended about the war, the Silent Majority, and a hypothetical phone-call to Nixon, before introducing the final speaker. Professor Humboldt reaches into his baggy jacket pockets for some file cards, clears his throat noisily into the microphone and begins to speak. He begins with a number, which Barry misses. Is it thousand or hundred thousand? Hundred million? In short impassioned bursts, Humboldt fires out figures: tons of explosives, thousands killed, millions interned in what he calls concentration camps . . . The numbers have an emotional rhetoric of their own; the effect is overwhelming, but finally confusing, and some of the faces in the street appear frightened.

"And Vietnam is not unique," the professor shouts, abstractedly pushing back the black flag of hair that flaps across his forehead. "Look at Laos and Cambodia, look at the Latin American dictatorships, look at Greece. . ." His catalogue of American crimes draws cheers and raised fists from the front of the stage. But Barry senses anger creeping into some of the other faces; anger at the crimes, but also at the speaker for tormenting them with facts, nothing but ugly facts. So much more exciting than meek hopes for peace, these outrages; but what is to be done? The professor ends his address without naming one thing that should be done. Sign a petition? Kidnap a Yankee official? Blow up an oil refinery? Drop out? Send a dollar to this box number? Nothing.

As he climbs down from the platform Humboldt throws Barry an uneasy glance. The two speeches have not complemented one another. The gathering Barry has to address looks confused and frustrated, not ready to be dismissed and told to go home.

"Thank you for being here," he says into the mike, his throat dry and constricted. "Unfortunately, no American official could accept our invitation to speak." Laughter starts in front, but doesn't spread. Barry sees Zak's peaked hat bobbing at the western fringe, and points toward him. "All the same, we will be marching the few blocks to the U.S. Consulate, to leave our calling card."

Rattling the drum now strapped around his neck, Zak leads the way, another student limping along beside him playing 'Yankee Doodle' on the flute. Leaving a space behind them, Reverend Cameron follows, surrounded by women and students. Barry recalls the instructions he is to give, and speaks again into the mike. "March in an orderly manner down the middle of the street. Stay within the police cordon." It seems absurd to be telling these people to control themselves. They shuffle slowly past the platform, reminding Barry of nothing so much as a movie lineup.

Two of the Students for Christ are dismantling the sound system.

Already, Sid has packed up the flags and pulleys along with the unused handouts. Barry steps down from the stage and links arms with Gloria at the end of the parade. From here only the faint march beat of the drum can be heard, and the signs and banners block their view of the front of the march.

Up ahead, the draft resisters have started a chant that drowns out 'Yankee Doodle':

HO HO HO CHI MINH. HO HO HO CHI MINH.

The whole street seems to be laughing with them, and the trumpeter adds to the noise, bleating out raucous notes.

HO HO HO CHI MINH.

And Barry and Gloria sing along, laughing and skipping arm in arm.

The original pair of policemen have been joined by reinforcements, and now guards accompany the demonstrators to see that there are no stragglers as the march moves out of the shopping core into the territory of oil company offices and construction sites. A few bypassers look on with mild interest from the sidewalks. Some teenage boys leave the curb and join the noisiest of the radicals. An unshaven man, perhaps a veteran, walks alongside with the police between him and the marchers, shouting 'Cowards! Traitors! Commies!' At least it is some reaction. It would be humiliating if no one were offended.

As they are nearing the Consulate, Barry hears screams up ahead, and a sound like a bottle smashing. Pickets wave crazily. He glimpses a man swinging his fist at someone or something on the ground. Everyone is pushing, trying to get away, but Barry hurries toward the disturbance: someone may be hurt. When he arrives at the intersection, two people are sprawled on the pavement. Policemen are nudging the curious toward the sidewalks, but Barry slips between them into the circle. Sid and one of the cops he swore at earlier are bent over Smoky, the apeman, who is on his back gasping for breath. Two officers huddle around a young woman on the curb.

"I was just watching," she gasps, running her fingers through a rip in her jacket. "I live right over there, ninth floor. I was watching from the sidewalk, when somebody pushed me from behind. Ran right over me. I feel like I've broken a rib."

The police crowd around her. "Could you recognize the man who hit you? Do you see him here?"

"What did he do then?" The cops scowl at Barry for asking, but listen with their notebooks open.

"He knocked that guy down." She nods at Smoky, who is standing up slowly, brushing off his overalls. Splinters of wood and scraps of paper--the remains of his poster--lie scattered on the road.

Leaning heavily on one of the officers, the young woman tries to stand. "No, you wait here," the other officer says, "I'll get you a squad car."

When Barry turns back to see how Smoky is, he finds Sid arguing with the cop who took Barry's name before the rally. "You can't arrest him!" Sid shouts. "He was attacked!"

The cop responds just as angrily. "Those people say he swung that picket like a weapon."

"But that wasn't him!" Sid yells. Someone on the sidewalk murmurs assent, but another disagrees.

"The girl says somebody knocked him down," Barry says.

The cop glares at him, then back at Sid. "You guys want to be witnesses?" He makes it sound like a threat.

Later at the police station, the scuffle on Eight Avenue is merely an irritating complication. The clerks are already busy taking down stories about a fight in Central Park. Sid, who has pocketed his beret to look more respectable, recognizes one of the men being escorted out of a back office. "Holy shit! He's a Maoist. They must have demonstrated at the cenotaph."

"O.K. you guys." The desk officer sighs wearily as Smoky is led forward and the contents of his pockets are deposited in a large brown envelope. Smoky, recovered from his winding, clowns around for his friends, turning his pockets inside out, but he is quickly led away to a back office, charged with assault and causing a disturbance.

"Assault!" Sid yells. "Who dya think he assaulted, that chick on the sidewalk?"

The desk officer shrugs. "Your friend better hope she's all right." While Sid and one of the bystanders are giving their statements, the desk officer hooks Barry's elbow. "You're the organizer of this thing aren't you?" A look of disgust punctuates the word 'thing'. "Are you aware of your legal responsibilities?"

"I think so." All Barry knows is that he hasn't done anything wrong.

"Well, you better make damn good and sure. There's the phone if you want to call a lawyer."

"Are you arresting me too?"

The officer purses his lips as if considering it, clearly enjoying Barry's worried expression. "Not now," he says at last, "but surely you'll supply a lawyer for that freak, won't you?'

Barry dials the College newspaper office and interrupts Zak in the midst of writing an article about the march. He promises to phone the Student Union's lawyer. "We ended up, a couple dozen of us, standing around the Consulate," Zak says, "listening to your Father Cameron pray. But that fight; that's really front page."

As Barry hangs up, Smoky is being led down the same hall where the Maoist disappeared. The desk cop stamps a sheet of paper and says, "Bail will be set in the morning."

Sid slaps the desk furiously. "You can't do that!" But the officer simply stares at him as if he can't believe he is so naive.

"Have you got the girl's story?" Barry asks. "The girl who was knocked down?"

"Girl?" The cop looks back at his file. "This is Eighth Avenue you're talking about? Oh yeah, woman taken to hospital. We'll get her story, don't worry."

"But you need it now," Barry insists. "To understand--"

Now the officer slaps the desk top. "You told us enough, all right? For a kid who didn't see nothing, you sure got a lot to say, don't you?"

## Incident Record

Date: 11.11.69

Time: 11:25 A.M.

Place: Eighth Avenue, between Fifth and Sixth Streets S.W.

Details: Disturbance during legal political demonstration (Calgarians Against War, organizer Barry MacDonald). Apparent fight between participant and spectator.

Charged: James Ronald Smith of Calgary, American citizen: assault, causing a disturbance.

Questioned: Sidney Hansen, Arnold Abella, Barry MacDonald, all of Calgary

To note: Demonstration was Leftist orientated. Check with Leo on Smith and friends Hansen and MacDonald, suspected Leftists.

## GOD SAVE HIM GOD DAMN IT

Scratch a veteran and you'll find a monarchist. This ex-tailgunner in the York for instance, with the dog-chewed ears and eyes that screw up when he blinks. Sid and Barry have no sooner sat down at the next table than he starts squirming in his seat, mumbling to his imaginary companion something about longhaired hippie atheists and-- Buy him a beer, and he slides his chair over, slaps Barry on the shoulder, pulls Sid's patchy beard playfully and begins the story of his first bombing mission--nineteen years old--and his medal pinned on by the King himself.

"God save him God damn it, I don't care what you say."

Barry laughs. "All I said is, Her Majesty's a pretty nice girl."

"Don't gimme that. I heard you say God is dead, you black--"

"The king, I said the king is dead." Barry is astounded the name of His Majesty can still inspire such passion.

The vet thoughtfully empties his glass of beer. "Yah, you young bastards don't know how lucky you are."

Many a veteran does know, however, and has cause to love Her Majesty today. God bless her, she wouldn't close the taverns on Veterans' Day. Between the Queens and the Imperial a steady parade of drinkers marches alone by the wall or in pairs holding each other up. A smaller troop braves the weather kitty-corner to the Colonial and thence west to the York on Centre Street.

"Now the king was a York, one of the kings," the tailgunner declares, wiping his mouth on his sleeve. "And the finest figure of a man you could hope to see. So you know what I mean, eh? Say a word against him and you answer to me."

Sid has finished his beer and chews on his cigar, looking at the door to show Barry it is time to leave. From the York it is more than a block to the Empress, and against such a wind it can't be walked on less than two rounds of draft. But more than three and the will is gone. So before their buddy finishes the tale of his last bombing mission--tail dragging over the Channel--Sid and Barry bail out, throw their collars over their faces and run for the walk light.

West of Centre Street the sidewalks are deserted; the drinkers are all indoors and the trolley buses rattle by nearly empty. After the York, the Empress seems hushed. Getting drunk is a serious business here, and nobody wants it spoiled by talk of war, old or new. The regulars at the next table eye Sid and Barry with silent suspicion, while young Indians in cowboy boots strut back and forth sizing up the bouncer.

Sid swallows the last of his beer and bangs the glass on the table. "Let's get going before Zak fills up the front page with your little protest."

"Aye, aye, Cap'n." But Barry is in no hurry to finish his drink. Sometimes Sid acts as if the Arrow would go down without him at the helm. "What'll you put on the front page then? The football scores?"

Sid spits out a shred of tobacco and heads for the door with quick short strides, making Barry scramble out of his chair to catch up. "Why dya wanna advertise your own failures?" Sid demands. "Just think of the headlines: 'A Hundred Calgarians Shiver One Hour for

Conscience'. Shit Barry, is that revolution? That clown Smoky did more than your whole damn rally to show what's really going down. The pigs were so scared they busted him for bleeding in the street."

Full circle. Now that it is over, Sid calls it 'your little protest'. Next he'll be saying he had no part in it. His beret will be tucked away in his desk drawer again, and once more he will ridicule the idea of co-operating with the Reverend Camerons and the Mrs. MacIntyres. Sid has never had to compromise, and never expects to. When he enrolled at tiny Bow College to get as far as possible from his parents and the path they had cleared for him into Osgood Hall, he went on drawing his allowance as always, not even answering letters from home. He would have been outraged if the money were denied him.

Sid's revolution, the one he's waiting for, will be swift and certain; it will involve no half-measures. He may, in the meantime, occasionally demonstrate, or publish a newspaper, adding his bit to the centuries of revolutionary promises, but he doesn't call that revolution. 'A real revolutionary,' he says, 'makes a revolution.'

It won't be today, however. Barry shivers as they walk into the stiff wind toward Bow College. Too optimistic about the day, he hasn't worn his winter coat, and has left his woolen tam at home in order to look less of a crank. He passes the Royal, but stops out of the wind in the entrance to the Wales tavern. "I'm getting in where it's warm," he says.

Sid grunts. "Come on, goddam it. Zak's probably barricaded himself inside the office by now, demanding Nixon's resignation."

"You go ahead." Barry waves the peace sign on his way inside.

"God save the Queen!"

Sid raises his fist. "Heil Hitler to you too."

The Herald box in the corner by the door is empty, so Barry buys yesterday's Globe and Mail--photos of Calley and Manson side by side on the front page; America's demonic twins--and takes it into the dark smoky bar. The Wales is end of track for monarchists: there are no royal watering holes further west. It is the tavern closest to the College, and yes, here are the remains of the demonstrators, still occupying two tables under the calf-roping mural, hunched over to listen to the bony psychology lecturer who marched with Bertrand Russell and a hundred thousand others, and won't let anyone forget it. Barry heads for the washroom first, hoping to miss the nuclear disarmament stories. He finds the prospect discouraging: year after year of brief demonstrations followed by interminable re-hashing. Is that their common fate, the veterans and the ones who talk about revolution? He doesn't want to end up crying in his beer over the fall of '69 like some ancient Grey Cup victory.

A radio is broadcasting the news from a speaker over the urinals: 'heavy shelling in the demilitarized zone', 'pro-Nixon demonstration in Washington draws fifty thousand'. A veteran leans against the urinal fumbling with his fly and assuring Barry in a loud voice that he is all right.

Barry decides that if he can't find Gloria in the bar he will go straight to the newspaper office, but on his way out the door he collides with a short wiry man, eyes down, his grey scalp partly covered by a khaki army cap. The man looks up with a ready scowl, and, shocked, Barry recognizes his own features on this pale beaten face. A dim light comes to the clouded eyes; a look of love perhaps, but swiftly contained and disguised as surprise. His father grasps Barry's shoulders to steady himself and barks gruffly, "What the hell they let you in here for? Why'nt you buy your old man a drink."

For as long as Barry can remember, Mack MacDonald has called himself his old man, but today the adjective fits. In the two years since their family fragmented, the steel-tough body he used to brag about has gone slack. Something pasty and grey appears to have been pushed under his sagging skin. He shoves Barry toward a table under the steer-wrestling mural, sits heavily with his back to the wall, removes his army cap and strokes his few strands of white hair.

Facing him across the table, Barry tries to recall whether Mack was this bald the last time they met. But the image that comes to Barry is of his father at the kitchen table, that summer morning in '67 after Mom left him, his hair retreating but still mostly black, talking not of his wife but of land prices. Again and again, as Barry listened, he reckoned what he would have been worth by then if he had stayed on the farm, if hail hadn't mowed down his wheat field and driven him finally off his father's land. That was ten years before Barry was born--1938--and a year later Mack was a soldier, on his way to Europe.

"Celebrating Remembrance Day?" Barry says, observing the bar of colored stripes pinned to Mack's windbreaker. The ribbons must be safe in a drawer at home.

"Armistice Day!" his father corrects him, and with a raised hand signals to the waiter for four glasses. "And you would too if you had any respect."

"I did my time," Barry tells him. "Two minutes, at the peace rally on the mall."

"Peace rally!" The old man's face colors suddenly. "You mean you were one of those s.o.b.'s! You swore at the cenotaph?" Tendons stiffen in his neck, and his hands grasp for something, for a chair, for the table edge, for the first glass of beer the waiter sets on the table.

"I wasn't anywhere near the cenotaph," Barry says. "On the mall, I told you."

"By Jaysus, boy, if I'd of seen you there...." Barry is all too familiar with his father's threats. He grew up trying to shape himself in opposition to this petty tyrant who for years extorted work from him at the cafe, and for little pay apart from insults and abuse. Barry couldn't help becoming the 'ornery child' his father called him.

"Know what we called the likes of you in the Army?"

"I know, you told me!" How many times? "You called them Zombies."

"And that's what they were!" the old man swears, as if he can never forgive. He replenishes himself with beer. "They got the right idea in Mexico, all right. They know what to do with those goddam student radicals."

"Sure," Barry taunts, "so did Hitler."

"Goddam right he did!" Mack's empty glass thumps the table. "We stopped him too soon, that's all."

A laugh sticks in Barry's throat. He knows his father would have loved another year or two of action, busting up limey pubs and parlay-vooing the Parisian whores. That's a man's life, eh? 'We stopped Hitler too soon.' This time he has outdone himself.

"Lookit, boy." Mack clutches his army cap. "You about wore this thing out when you was a kid. Ever read the insignia?" His hand shakes too violently for Barry to read. "Says 'Defence Not Defiance', Barry. Unnerstand?" He beats his chest proudly.

"I understand," Barry answers. "You fought for our freedom, so we've got no right to complain. That it?" His father has always told him the war made a man of him. 'Defence Not Defiance.' To be a man, then, is to follow orders. It is freedom from choice.

Mack was one of Calgary's first volunteers when the war started. If nothing else, it made a working man of him. The Army was his first steady job, and nearly became his career. In Barry's first memories his father is hugging him against a rough khaki uniform. (That was during a later war though, and Mack didn't make it overseas.) Was he leaving for camp or arriving home? There were so many Hello's and Goodbye's that they have become confused in Barry's memory. It was snowing, early morning, the half-ton was warming up in the driveway. The toast and porridge both burned, but Mom put them in front of him anyway, and when Barry saw the tears on her face he ate without complaining. That morning still tastes of scorched cereal and brown sugar, as the summer morning in '67 smells of his father's Export A's and beer.

"I had a call from Mom on Sunday," Barry says. His father watches hotdogs rotating in the grill at the bar. "She's doing all right in

Regina, I guess. Working for Uncle Frank." Mack snorts contemptuously as he does whenever Uncle Frank is mentioned, and studies a cigarette burn in the arborite table top.

Over two years now, and Barry's father hasn't spoken a word about his wife and daughter. It is as if they simply drove out of his life that morning. Which is what they would have done if Barry hadn't been working the graveyard shift and come stomping in the back door early in the morning, and wakened the old man while Mom and Lizzie were waiting for a taxi. Barry had just stretched out on the bed in his basement room when something heavy hit the kitchen floor above him. He heard his father shouting, smashing a pot against the cupboards for emphasis, and by the time he reached the top of the stairs his parents were in the front yard, both pulling on a big canvas suitcase.

'Let me carry it for you, goddammit,' Mack was shouting. 'I'll help you go.' But with a fierce look on her face, Mom wrenched the bag out of her husband's hands and backed with it into the cab where Lizzie was waiting. Neither mother nor daughter looked back as the taxi drove away.

Barry hadn't been told of their plans to leave, but he was glad to see it happen at last. He had always known the cold war between his parents would boil over some day. Ever since they had opened Mack's Cafe the battle lines were drawn. Barry's surprise was not that Mom left, but that she had the strength to go even after Mack discovered what she was doing. If Lizzie had shown any reluctance, or been softened by any of the compliments Mack used to keep her washing dishes at the cafe, the old arrangement might have gone on and on. A partnership, he called it, but having provided the name he virtually retired to the Legion, leaving the work to Mom. He could be gentle and loving sometimes, if he had drunk just enough--and at those times he would promise to change--but when he woke up afterwards all promises were forgotten.

The morning his wife left him, the old man stood on the curb, watching after the cab while the sky brightened and in the west the moon faded from sight. Sparrows chattered on the power lines, and robins chased each other across the lawns, fighting over a worm. Finally he picked up some papers that had blown into the hedge, and went back to the house. Barry followed, knowing his father was liable to do anything if left on his own.

Mack sat the whole morning at the kitchen table, eating bran muffins Mom had baked and left behind for him, and drinking all the beer in the fridge. Not a word about his wife. Whenever Barry mentioned her, this silence. The old man talked of chances missed, years lost, but as if he thought only of money. As if his family had never existed. 'If a fella had a little money to invest...' he kept saying. And when the cafe was sold, he did.

"No more for me," Barry says as his father signals the waiter for another round. "I have to go."

"Never mind," Mack grumbles looking away. "It'll get drunk." Now that he can't give his son orders, he has little to say. But as Barry stands and starts for the door, Mack grabs his arm and squeezes. "You come see me, eh Barry? Look me up, we'll have a Christmas drink."

"Sure," Barry says. "If you don't mind drinking with a zombie like me."

Mack pushes his arm away, disgusted. "Ah, bugger off. You hear me?"

## INNOCENT BYSTANDER

A hot dry wind meets Barry as he enters the Student Centre and the door shuts out the traffic sound behind him. The cafeteria and bookstore are closed, the broad central staircase deserted. Without student radio's incessant rock'n'roll the foyer is as still as a mausoleum. Signs of life, however, paper every wall. Job opportunities contend for bulletin board space with books for sale, environment clippings, rides wanted, rooms for rent, ski club trips.... Part way up the stairway a poster calling for Support to the Vietnamese People's Liberation Struggle is partially obscured by a pink-and-white Jack Frost Hop banner.

Surprised to see the second-floor Student Union office open, Barry goes in to ask how to contact the lawyer about Smoky, just in case Zak has got side-tracked, as often happens, and forgotten his promise. A large red and black eye watches him from over the office door: a poster for the play Zak has been rehearsing, "Innocent Bystander". Zak or Sid must have posted it here intentionally, to reflect the Big Brother-ish image they give Mark Minor, the Student Union President, in their newspaper columns. Minor is self-serving and self-important. Since being elected he has made thousands as a band promoter, mostly for College functions, and since September has been openly campaigning for re-election. He is always poking his crooked, football-player's nose into the Arrow's affairs because the newspaper isn't advertising him as he thinks it should. But Big Brother he's not. Sid ought to understand that such name-calling only exaggerates Minor's importance: it amounts to flattery. But he can't let a threat go by without a rabid reply in print.

The smell of cigarette smoke leads Barry through the empty outer office to the president's own. He finds Minor, dwarfed by his big desk, leafing through a sheaf of papers which he covers with a file folder as soon as he sees Barry.

"I didn't hear you knock, MacDonald. You looking for anything in particular, or just snooping?" Minor normally affects a vote-winning smile, but for Arrow writers he reserves a sneer of contempt.

"Hard at it, eh Mark? Don't you take holidays like us mortals?"

Minor rolls his chair back, his hands crossed in front of him, self-satisfied. "To you it's a holiday, to me it's a chance to get ahead . . . Is that what you came to ask?"

"No." Barry casually sits on a corner of the desk and turns his head to look at the edge of typed paper the folder doesn't quite cover. Mark quickly slips the papers into the top drawer of his desk. His private business, Barry guesses, not the Union's. "I just wondered . . . did Zak get in touch with you about the Student Union's lawyer?"

"What's he need a lawyer for? Somebody finally charge him with libel?"

"No, it's about Smoky. He's been jailed on false charges, and we want to find out--"

"Yeah, yeah, Zak told me the whole sob story." Minor grins and swivels back and forth in his chair. "What's it got to do with Student Union, anyway?"

"Well, Smoky's on the Arrow staff." The truth is he drops by the office once in awhile, looking for Zak.

"Was he on newspaper business when he was arrested? You're supposed to report the news--the campus news--not make it by breaking the law."

"Look, all I want to do is ask a few questions. Now, will you give me the lawyer's number?"

Minor makes him wait for an answer while he stubs his cigarette and lights another. "What, and take business away from some struggling lawyer out there?" Barry laughs, but Minor obviously doesn't mean it as a joke. "This isn't some kind of welfare office, MacDonald. You need legal advice, you can damn well pay the market value." Minor grins again, pulling his chair back to the huge desk that keeps a distance between them.

"All right," Barry says, sliding off the desk and going to the door. "I guess I was off my head coming here. You know, I actually thought you'd help somebody in trouble."

He doesn't plead or get angry. He won't give Minor the satisfaction. But as he runs upstairs he is furious at himself for asking for help. Pay the market value: it is exactly what he should have expected of Minor.

Barry gets an idea for one of his Bucky Canuck stories. This time Bucky is a sailor, and finds someone shipwrecked, bobbing up and down in the ocean crying for rescue. Bucky would like to help, but being a Canuck he first has to ask Uncle Sam, the ship's captain. 'There's somebody drowning here, do you like the slant of his eyes? What if he can't pay for his passage?' That is what Minor would want to know.

Entering the newspaper office, Barry is bombarded by images. Bulletin boards are overloaded with posters and slogans, clippings and photos, some waving in the forced air from the heating vents. Tables and chairs face in all directions, typewritten paper is stacked in crooked piles on the desk tops. There is even more than the usual clutter of dirty dishes and ashtrays left untouched since Sunday night's paste-up session. From Sid's cubicle at the back comes the sound of his slow, two-fingered typing. From his corner, Zak waves the peace sign at Barry. Still dressed in his blue eighteenth-century coat, he is sitting with his boots on the desk top and the telephone at his ear, under a huge poster of a mushroom cloud. A living anachronism. A cardboard slogan hangs from the ceiling over his head:

HISTORY BEGINS AT HIROSHIMA.

Gloria is writing longhand at a wallbench, her eyes hidden by hair that falls straight over her checked flannel shirt. As Barry crosses to her he watches her small hands writing. Graceful as her handwriting, they are surprisingly elegant hands, seemingly out of place with her broad shoulders and her round, plain, candid face. He has time only to notice that she is writing a business letter before she slides some poster paper over it and turns to him. Her smile is calm, approving, but not an invitation to kiss.

"Everybody has secrets today," Barry remarks. "Are you writing your lover?" He lifts a corner of the poster paper.

"No, nothing like that." Gloria puts her hand on his. "It's just a letter to my M.P."

Barry smiles. He guesses that she has joined another of Andrea

Delisle's campaigns for more social services. "What's so shameful about that?"

"Nothing; but Sid was laughing at it just now. I thought--"

"Let him laugh." Barry himself has joked about the futility of such letters, but after the help Gloria gave him in organizing this morning's protest he has no wish to insult her. "Why did you take off last night? Was I boring you?"

Gloria shakes her head, smiling timidly. "I felt like an intruder. You know." She shakes her head and her hair is thrown behind her shoulder. "I couldn't stand to watch those two pick at each other."

"Those two?" She looks quickly toward Zak, then lowers her eyes, and Barry laughs with relief. It wasn't anything he himself said, then. It was only Margot and Zak. Barry hardly notices their bickering anymore. They are the only couple living in the Co-op, and Margot's daughter Amy is the only child, so they have peculiar problems that are aggravated by the lack of privacy in the house. Petty irritations between them build up until, like last night, they become the main bout. But the fight is usually over some insignificant thing that is forgotten by the time they have made up. Last night everyone was laughing about it--Margot and Zak included--a half hour after Gloria left.

Hooking the telephone receiver over his shoulder, Zak re-dials and calls across the office to Barry. "Party at the Co-op tonight. Invite everybody you know. It's a benefit to raise bail for Smoky."

"At the Co-op? When did the Co-op decide?" Barry knows very well that Zak has made the decision on his own.

Zak leans back in his swivel chair, stroking his single gold earring as he does whenever he is excited. "No time to call a meeting. Smoky's in jail, for Chrissake!"

"But if the Co-op doesn't make the decisions together, what makes it a co-op?" Barry doesn't want Smoky to stay in jail, of course, but Zak, who would give you anything of his own you asked for, forgets that what is the Co-op's isn't his to give.

Sid, on the other hand, doesn't care about Smoky except as a martyr, a rallying point for a Free Smoky campaign. Sid continues to tap away at his typewriter with his back to the door of his cubicle.

"You should have heard Sid earlier," Gloria tells Barry. "He was going on and on about how fucking useless the demonstration was." She pulls in her chin, smokes an imaginary cigar, and pounds the bench, mimicking Sid. "Fuck that peace-and-love crap, he says. Peace isn't revolutionary."

"No," Barry says, "ask Sid, he'll tell you saying fuck's revolutionary. Don't trust anybody who says phooey."

As if on cue, Mark Minor storms through the door, flushed with anger, a copy of tomorrow's Arrow in his fist. "Where's that fucking boss of yours?" he shouts. Zak shrugs and pushes his swivel chair toward Sid's cubicle to head him off. But Minor is already past him.

Though Minor slams the door, his every word can be heard in the outer office, and according to the fuck test, he ought to be the most revolutionary person on earth. "God damn it, Hansen, you motherfucker, I won't sit still for any more of your shitslinging. You'll be laughing out your asshole when I get through with you."

"Better get this down," Zak shouts, rolling a sheet of paper into his typewriter. "Call it a letter to the editor." Laughing, Barry holds up his hands to frame a headline:

ARROW RECEIVES DEATH THREAT.

Minor has been in and out of the office all fall, accusing the paper of biased reporting, calling it too radical and too vulgar. But his attempts to tell the editor what to write have given Sid one of the few 'campus-orientated' stories he cares to report.

"This is your last warning," Minor yells, bursting red-faced out of Sid's office and hurrying toward the door. "I want to see some changes around here, or you're through." He glares at Barry who is stifling a laugh. "All of you!" Laughter follows Minor out of the office.

When Sid appears in the door of his cubicle, he too is obviously angry. He normally grins through Minor's tirades, nodding his head and saving his replies for the editorial page. But this is the first time Minor has complained about an issue before it has been released.

"God damn printers," Sid grumbles. "They'd let any jackass walk in off the street and have a look." He scratches his ragged beard and looks at his watch. "That's enough," he yells, taking his keychain from his pocket. "Closing up shop."

Barry is the first one ready to leave. "We're going on strike?"

The look Sid gives him is one a stray dog wouldn't deserve. "Strike? Grow up, Barry. Nothing would make Minor happier . . . It's time for supper. And from now on this door stays locked unless I'm here, understood?" Barry knows that Minor must have access to a key, but he has learned not to argue with Sid when he is in this mood.

Outside on the pavement the wind has dropped, and with it the temperature. The afternoon is darkening early. When Gloria pauses in front of the College residence, her notebook held across her chest, Barry says, "You're coming to the Co-op for supper aren't you?'

Zak calls back, "Don't you think the Co-op better decide on that?"

Gloria has become so frequent a guest at suppertime that she has begun to contribute to the grocery fund. As they walk toward the bridge at Tenth Street, she holds Barry's hand in the pocket of her coat, and talks about the latest excesses of Alice, her roommate in residence. Barry hardly ever visits Gloria in her room, chiefly because of Alice, who is rarely at home but whose arrivals are unpredictable. Since September she has graduated from booze to acid and speed, and become blindly devoted to her boyfriend, the supplier. Compulsively neat, she keeps her side of the tiny room almost as bare as if it were unoccupied, but her paranoid presence clings like smoke to the walls. Lately, Gloria says, Alice has convinced herself the narcs are watching her, and has taken to hiding her stash of pills in Gloria's closet, and, incidentally, wearing Gloria's clothes without permission.

"You don't have to put up with that," Barry tells her. "Why not move into the Co-op? You could bunk with me."

Gloria squeezes his hand and smiles at him like a prisoner who has just been pardoned. "You really mean it?"

"Sure, why not?" Having said it, Barry thinks of a dozen reasons why not. He has always been the one nobody could tie down. Has she manipulated him into this? Who will get hurt when they have to split up? Even the room itself argues against her moving in. He has begun to love his disordered top-floor garret, with its scrapbook walls, its floor carpeted with magazines and broken-spined paperbacks, its corners insulated with newspapers and dirty clothes. Whenever they spend an afternoon together there and he leaves the room for a minute, he finds her picking up when he returns. Yet, the happiness that came to her eyes just now--

"You could bunk with me," he repeats in what he thinks is a casual voice, "then you'll be first in line when a room comes open."

Gloria presses closer to him. "Maybe," she says, "at the end of the month . . ." Feeling her cheek on his shoulder, Barry realizes that, however cool and commonsensical they pretend to be, they both have a lot invested in this decision.

They walk on in silence, past aging two-storey houses with postage stamp lawns crowded up against the street. It frustrates Barry to know that today's protest has changed nothing in these houses, where people still try to cultivate the fussy, ordered gardens and live the quiet, orderly lives that stultify the city's suburbs. He wants to break down the hedges that isolate people from everything they won't admit being part of. But what can he do to show them that a war across the world touches them? That they have already given up, without a shot being fired, what Vietnam is fighting against such odds to keep. If a thousand people, a hundred thousand, marched down this street, who in these cozy homes would care, apart from the inconvenienced drivers? Yet Barry has to do something, somehow has to make them see.

Sid and Zak have stopped and are talking at the end of the bridge. Sid's room is in the basement of a house a block away on the south side of the river, while the Co-op is north, across the bridge.

Zak's broad smile reveals no anxiety about how to make Calgarians see the war. "It must be love," he says as Barry and Gloria approach.

Sid grimaces. "See you losers tonight," he says. "We'll plan how to spring Smoky."

"Don't worry about Smoky," Barry assures him. "Those charges'll never stick."

"They better not. If he's not free tomorrow night, there'll be hell to pay."

"But Smoky's not the issue," Barry argues. "The war is, and the system that makes it inevitable. We can't let people lose sight of that."

Sid steps off the curb, muttering an obscenity about pigs as he waits for a car to pass. But an idea has caught at Barry's mind; a way, perhaps, to show people what they are doing. There is little traffic on the bridge--only a couple of pedestrians in sight--but numbers aren't important. "Hey Zak," he says, "how about the Innocent Bystander routine? Right here."

Sid snorts in disgust. "No such thing as an innocent bystander." But he is startled into silence when Zak, grinning, drives a stage punch into Barry's stomach and Barry groans loudly, falling onto his back on the dirty sidewalk. The skit is intended for the theatre lobby before the performance, but as Zak has said, it can stand by itself, any time, anywhere. Zak pushes his boot into the pavement under Barry, who moans, rolling over. From the ground he sees Gloria shaking her head and walking away, her notebook pulled tight across her chest. Once more, he finds himself playing the fool in front of her.

Sid, having caught on, gives Barry a kick too, but he is not as good as Zak at faking. Barry loses his breath when Sid's boot connects with his ribs. As Sid kicks he yells, "This'll teach you, you little gook!"

Barry gasps convincingly, and seeing a young couple in ski jackets and blue jeans hurrying by he reaches out for their feet. "Help me," he moans.

Zak begins spitting on him now, and Sid gets carried away, calling him wop, kike, gook, chink, bohunk, pinko, queer. Barry rolls over on the dirty pavement, and is thinking that this torture could go on for hours before anyone steps in, when a short round lady appears, swinging her purse furiously and screaming, "Stop it! Stop it you!" Dodging blows, Zak runs across the street, and Sid follows. "Are you all right, poor thing?"

Barry rolls onto his stomach, ribs aching, hands freezing against the pavement. His rescuer is a woman his mother's age, in a cloth coat; a janitress perhaps, for whom today is no holiday. Thanking her, he looks around for these others who did nothing, but they have made themselves scarce. The woman takes a rumpled Kleenex out of her purse, moistens it, and starts to wipe the dirt off Barry's face.

Suddenly, Zak yells from the far sidewalk, "Cops!", and Barry springs to his feet, running. The startled woman's handbag is sent flying, its contents scattering across the sidewalk.

A moment later when Barry looks back, a cop is helping the lady pick up her belongings and return them to her purse. Telling himself, probably, that he has prevented a pursesnatching.

By the time Barry has caught up to Gloria he is satisfied he is not being followed. Sid and Zak didn't stop running, and must be at their own places by now.

Gloria brushes dirt off his sweater, her mouth set in a tight line. "What do you think you proved back there?"

"Proved?" Barry grins. "Nothing." Yet he can't help feeling great, bruises and all. Before they reach the end of the bridge, Gloria is once again warming his hand in her pocket.

"What was she like? The woman who helped you?"

Barry shrugs, gazing down at the swift-flowing river where lumps of ice are being carried downstream and beginning to pile up on the gravel bank under the bridge. "She was like . . . one of those ladies who gives away Watchtowers downtown."

Date: 11.11.69

From: Leo

To: Elephant

Subject: New Dormouse Files

1. Herewith, police reports of two simultaneous civil disturbances in Calgary.

2. N.B. Local authorities treat the 'Park' and 'Mall' incidents as separate and unrelated, whereas,

3. Leo files indicate that the single issue of the magazine Insurgence (Summer 1969), edited by a member of the 'Mall' group, includes articles by members of both groups.

4. Proceed with investigation on the assumption that the two Calgary incidents constitute a single manifestation, and that the activities of the two groups are co-ordinated.

5. Instruct Dormouse to open files on principles for whom they do not already exist, viz.

i) Barry MacDonald

. . . .

## ANARCHISTS UNITE

The common room floor sags and creaks under the weight of dancers. Throughout the congested ground floor of the Co-op, conversation has to compete with the Rolling Stones' thundering beat. People shout to make themselves heard over others, who in turn raise their voices and form tight circles of talk. Colorful scarves, beads and bells are worn over uniform khaki. Blue jeans are standard, the patches an art form.

Barry circulates, hat in hand, reminding people the party is for Smoky, who can't be here. "Come on, you could be the next they lock up. Fives, tens . . . A one?" Resorting to one of his never-forgotten magic tricks from childhood, Barry turns a dollar bill into a five, and someone in his audience gladly matches it. The envelope he takes upstairs for safe-keeping contains over two-hundred dollars.

As he reaches the second-floor landing, ten-year-old Amy races up the stairs past him and slams her bedroom door, followed closely by Margot, who picks up the skirt of her long denim dress as she climbs.

"Now you get in that bed and stay there," she cries. This is at least the third time tonight, Barry knows, that Amy has been sent to bed, but each time she has crept downstairs to watch the people.

Barry had seen Margot among the audiences at the city's folk music clubs for two years before she met Zak, and Amy would usually be with her, listening quietly until she fell asleep on her mother's lap. But in the few months since they moved into the Co-op, Amy has grown wild, as if two parents were worse than one. And with so many people in the house, she now has a dozen or more adopted parents, some of whom can always be counted on to let her have her way. Margot smiles apologetically at Barry as she starts back downstairs, but she can't completely do away with the beleaguered expression that has become habitual with her.

After stowing the envelope of money in his room and re-reading today's postcard from Tom--written in flight over the Atlantic--Barry returns by the narrow back stairway to the kitchen, which is the most crowded room in the house. People stay here after re-filling their glasses, to talk where the music is less deafening, and stand in the way of others seeking re-fills. Reaching, pushing, pouring, being poured on . . . Talking, talking above the noise. At the sink, World Unity (drinking Scotch) is being accused of Cultural Imperialism (rye), while on the basement stairs Essence (wine) is being talked into silence by Existence (beer). But the arguments are interchangeable. Existence could be called imperialism; unity, essence. The words can't be pinned down to precise meanings, and people prefer it that way. It is not sense they want tonight, but a loud intellectual rumbling to go with the music. Smoky in his jail cell, the war, any hope for a change . . . they all seem far away.

Someone at the refrigerator door hands Barry a beer and, opening it, he sees Gloria leaning against the doorjamb. She is listening to Andrea Delisle talk in overdrive at two student councillors she has trapped against the wall.

Last spring, Andrea led the campaign for student representation on college administrative councils. Now, though she herself is childless and on the pill, she wants Bow College to open a day care centre. And she would like the job of running it. "But the government says it's cutting welfare to single mothers going to university. As if they're second-class citizens!" She waves her hands in front of her as she talks, scattering ashes from her lipstick-stained cigarette. "Is Bow College a public institution," she demands, "or just another preserve of the elite?"

The two councillors nod, but evidently don't understand what it has to do with them. They watch her moving cigarette, worried that one of her beautiful golden locks will catch fire.

"Who do those gals think they are," Barry says as he joins them, "thinking they can go to university like decent folks?"

Once this would have infuriated Andrea. Now she pointedly ignores him, blowing smoke toward the ceiling, and continues to harangue the councillors. Student Council has to write letters to the elected officials, she tells them, expressing support for the women.

"So that's what you were writing your M.P. about," Barry says to Gloria. By unspoken consent, they drift into the dining room. "Who do you think reads those letters?"

"They'll be read," she says determinedly. "It's the only way to put pressure on, to make things happen."

"The only way? Don't be so discouraged."

"I'm not--" She is stopped by his mocking smile, and frowns. Hurt? He kisses her forehead, asking forgiveness, and she pulls him toward the common room dancing floor. "I'm writing letters," she says. "I'm not out to change the world."

"I know, but who is? That's what worries me." Barry keeps on into the front hall: Their hands part for a moment, then she is with him again.

From his pedestal on the front stairs, Sid is lecturing the Arrow's staff and anyone else who will listen. "It's awful damn convenient the pigs just happened to be looking the other way when that bastard broke into line."

Barry perches on the windowsill at the bottom of the stairs. "Must be a conspiracy," he says, "there's no other explanation."

"Don't laugh!" Sid snaps, pointing his smoking cigar at Barry.

Zak leans against the railing, his hands pushed to the knuckles into the front pockets of his jeans, and laughs at them both. "Back in the home of the free," he boasts in his John Wayne drawl, "the pigs bust heads themselves, on horseback."

Barry is about to say the Mounties are too modern to use horses when, "Get serious!" Gloria cries. "You guys talk as if we live in a police state."

Sid laughs, blowing a triumphant cloud of smoke. "Listen! The child speaks." He points her out like a specimen. "I know a nice policeman helped you once when you were lost my dear . . . But grow up!"

Gloria stares back at him until the laughter subsides, then lifts her nose slightly at Sid, who replies by flicking up the middle finger of his fisted hand. Barry does nothing, knowing the only way to win an argument with Sid is to refuse to argue. Sid claims he can tell when somebody joined the Movement by the way he gives the sign, whether smiling ironically, or with a vicious upward jerk. But this is a new technique: he pointed that finger at Gloria as if he were firing a gun.

Sid moves the talk on, as Barry knew he would, in search of new targets, but Gloria remains tense. She nudges Barry, signalling she wants to leave. But a pudgy blond kid called Ed the Red is telling about his year in Moscow, and Barry has questions to ask. Finally, Gloria empties her wine glass and walks back toward the kitchen alone.

Ed describes with enthusiasm factory tours and monuments to heroes of the Great Patriotic War, and has ready answers to all Barry's questions about Czechoslovakia, and why the Soviets can't allow a free press. But Barry is struck by the complacency of his voice. Ed espouses Communism, not Revolution. He believes revolution is inevitable, so he doesn't have to do anything about it but wait. He and Sid are talking so casually about the balance of terror that, to stop them, Barry recites his nuclear prayer, crossing himself and bestowing episcopal blessings on them.

Our Deterrent
Which art on alert
Hallowed be thy overkill
Thy mission done
Blown to kingdom come
On earth as it is in orbit.

As he bows deeply, Barry's woolen tam slips from his head. Someone snatches it off the floor and hands it up to Sid, who regards it with obvious disgust. The tam is covered like a frosh cap with buttons: a peace sign, Press tag, Scots nationalist flag, the slogans ANARCHISTS UNITE and GROUCHO MARXIST PARTY.

"You're no kind of Marxist, MacDonald." Sid sneers and tosses the tam at Barry's feet. "You're not even an anarchist. What the hell are you?"

"Something far worse, Sid. A journalist."

"Bullshit! If you spent half the fucking energy on hard reporting you do on these pranks, you could say that. But wake up, man, you're not living in the real world."

"Maybe not. If I were, I might have to give up hope."

"You don't make sense."

"I hope not."

"You think if you set loose a hundred doves or something, that they'll bring peace on earth?" The laughter that follows is out of proportion to Sid's wit. Cruel laughter.

Just once Barry would like to hear what Sid proposes to do, to make his revolution. He is not stockpiling guns, or training an elite corps, though in his terms that would make sense. And he puts down Zak and Barry for giving their effort to the Co-op. It can't be enough simply to tear other people down. After a hundred or more of these insensitivity sessions, he still hasn't taken the first step toward his new order, socialism or whatever he calls it. Big business still calls the shot, and war is still the biggest business of all. What can Sid or anyone do about it? Free Smoky? That's like wrestling with the giant's toe instead of cutting off his head. Yet they're not even freeing Smoky, they're having a party, they're talking and talking.

When the talk has moved on and Sid is taking verbal stabs at someone else, Barry slips down from the windowsill and walks away. In the kitchen doorway he meets Gloria, who turns away from him pretending indifference.

"You have time for me now. What's the matter, they get tired of you?" His apologetic grin can't make her smile this time. She speaks out of a resentment he hasn't seen in her before. "They're not really as cynical as they pretend, are they? If they were, there'd be no triumph in putting people down." It is almost exactly what Tom said one night he had been Sid's victim. Barry puts his hand on Gloria's warm damp neck, and she backs away. But she follows slowly when he takes her hand and walks toward the dance floor.

Weaving through the crowd into the darkened common room, he is pressed against Gloria, who holds onto him tightly. The scent of her hair, like pepper, reminds him that he hasn't been this close to her all day. It is as if, once he learned she wasn't angry with him, he felt free to neglect her once more, while he raised money for Smoky and worried about the future of the Movement. He resolves to stay with her for the rest of the night, and show her he hasn't forgotten her.

They have just begun to dance, though, when the heavy rock music is cut off. Zak, ignoring the noisy complaints, is tuning in the local television news to see how this morning's protest has been covered. In the flickering light, grey faces crowd around the set. Barry sees himself on the small screen, trailing a ragged bunch of kids as they trudge up Eighth Avenue. He thinks again of a movie lineup. It is the same footage that was shown on the six o'clock news. The same glib television voice reads the same text. It seems naive to have expected any more than this. Sandwiched between jerky footage of a fist fight in Central Park and a jackknifed tanker truck in a city underpass, the march doesn't even make an interesting disorder. But surely it doesn't have to be this way. Elsewhere, the Movement has caught fire. Why not here? The German students were astonished last year when the people supported their strike. It would take no more of a miracle here. Release a thousand doves--why not?--it's the image that grabs attention.

Someone turns the dial to the other channel, on which a talk show has begun, then switches the television off. But the party has lost its momentum; everyone has classes or work in the morning. Those who have been dancing, having worn themselves out, are the first to drift toward the front door. As the indefatigable talkers take over the chesterfield and easy chairs, Gloria whispers that she too ought to be going. She remains on the couch, though, her legs curled under her, holding Barry's arm around her.

In the absence of electronic sound, his eardrums are ringing, his nerves still a-jangle. He sits quietly, enjoying the warmth of her body against his, until Sid begins boasting about what he'll do if Smoky isn't set free.

"Why tilt at windmills, Sid?" Barry says leaning forward. "When Smoky's freed, nothing will be changed. The power will still be where it's always been. You don't need a martyr. Why not organize something big, like a student strike for peace?"

The room is hushed a moment. For all their enthusiasm to get Smoky out of jail, no one can argue that it will achieve their real goal. When Sid answers, though, he ignores that fact and strikes at Barry's weakest point. "Strikes are old line, MacDonald, they never work." The others are relieved.

"You're not in class half the time anyway, Barry," Gloria says. "Who'd notice if you were on strike?"

"Not a strike against classes," Barry answers, the idea just beginning to take shape in his mind, "against jobs. If all the graduates refused to work for any company connected with the war, pretty soon the Death Machine would grind to a halt."

"Bullshit! Impossible!" Sid cries. "You mean, you expect every engineer to give up the twenty-thousand-dollar job he's been sweating blood to get?"

It does sound ludicrous, as naive as when Barry, as a boy, told his mother to send his green beans to the starving children in Korea. "I didn't say it'd be easy," he maintains. "I said it'd work." It would take a miracle, but who would go on living if he didn't believe in miracles? Barry refuses to admit that no one wants peace enough to make sacrifices for it.

He has just begun trying to defend himself, however, when Gloria pulls her hand away from his and angrily brushes past him, out of the room. Ignoring Sid's taunting laughter, Barry follows, and finds her in the front hallway, buttoning her coat. "You go back to your damn struggle," she says, refusing to look into his eyes. "You don't need me hanging around." He takes her arm, but she shakes it free, crying, "Let me be!" She opens the door and wraps her scarf around her face until he can see only her eyes, and he can't be sure whether she is angry or crying.

He reaches for her hand, trying again to stop her. "Can I at least drive you home? I"ll borrow Zak's van."

"Don't bother." She pulls away from him and he is reminded of his mother, pulling her suitcase toward the taxi. "Go on, have your fun. I can't help you solve the world's problems, Barry. I have too many of my own." She runs down the sidewalk without looking back, wisps of blown snow curling around her feet.

From behind him, Barry hears the sound of Zak's fancy picking on his banjo, and the tuneless, enthusiastic accompaniment of a kazoo. If Gloria had waited a few minutes longer, the politics would have been submerged in the music, and she might not have run away. But though he watches until she is around the corner and out of sight, she doesn't turn back.

# TAKE A SAD SONG

The last song sung, the last slogan shouted by Sid on his way out the door, Zak and Margot having chased little Amy upstairs for the last time and gone to bed, Barry finds himself alone in the common room, slumped in an old stuffed chair--his fingertips stinging from guitar playing, his body numb--barely hearing the words Dylan is crooning harmoniously as a hacksaw on the stereo. The room Barry sees when he opens his eyes is a disaster area of empty beer bottles and overflowing ashtrays. The small black cat is licking at a potato chip on the scuffed hardwood floor.

Barry's nervous system hasn't yet accepted that the party is over. Voices jump out of memory as if spoken aloud. He keeps expecting to see someone stroll back from the kitchen and continue talking. Gloria--but she left long ago--or Tom. If Tom were here they would make coffee and talk the night away. They wouldn't let this day end with nothing changed.

Nor, Barry had thought, would Gloria. Until now she has been the one person he could talk to in perfect freedom, without having to try to be correct and serious. She is always disclosing something new about herself, asking questions he has never asked himself. When she first walked into the newspaper office--hoping to write reviews and get free tickets to concerts and plays--he thought he knew her type: the country girl who has never been so far from her mother and never will be again. But she soon taught him his restlessness is no city or male prerogative. Since the day they discovered they had both been hitchhiking the Trans-Canada at the same time, and spent the afternoon in the cafeteria sharing their adventures, they have held nothing back from one another. His private thoughts have become like a dialogue with her.

But she is not here. His arguments with Sid are too serious and correct for her. Too serious! Yet nothing is achieved by them. Across the city the factories are still rumbling--at this hour--producing dynamite to blow up northern Alberta so the seismographers can find oil to fuel the bombers and grease the cogs of the great machine that grinds us all into bits of ourselves. Gloria knows that--who can not know it?--yet at the mention of a strike she ran away. Is it impolite, then--or impolitic--to notice what is happening?

The record ends, but instead of coming to rest, the needle arm returns to the first cut.

The times they are a-changin'.

Underneath the static the singer's voice still cracks with conviction. But the words--coming from an enormous distance across a confusion of years--no longer inspire Barry's confidence. Surely, if the cry for peace is heard around the world, peace must come. But though the peace movement keeps growing, the bombing goes on at an accelerating pace. Times are still changing, but who is changing fastest with the times?

Barry doesn't blame the local television station for being behind the times. If other demonstrations get favorable--even sensational--coverage, that must be because they are no longer considered dangerous. All the hype is enough to make him wonder what really important stories are going unreported. Who is sneaking in the back door while everyone is pointing the other way crying Revolution? The revolution may promise millenium, but it hasn't found a way to get past 1984.

Barry's talk used to turn millenial on those grey summer nights in the basement he shared with Tom last year. The promise of the future rose on the horizon like the Rocky Mountains on a clear day, all obstacles ignored if seen at all. Barry was working in the C.P.R. yards then, and he went about his chores raging inwardly against his drudgery and paltry wages, and wanting to hop one of the outbound trains and ride it wherever it was going. But he knew he wasn't tied to that job, or to this city. The Co-op was still a dream then, and he thought the newspaper could really make things happen. He believed he could shed the tangled past as easily as he shed his greasy clothes at shift's end.

Some weeks he and Tom both worked the swing shift, and they would sit up till dawn listening to music and talking. They both thought of themselves as citizens of the world. The freedom movements of Africa were closer to them than the troubles of their landlady upstairs. From Barry's vantage point on the verge of a revolutionary future, all history seemed spread out like a map, with a single wave spreading from the east, growing larger and stronger, and reaching the culmination of all extremes on the West Coast.

At the same time, Tom was preparing to reverse that historical direction, and go east. He thought of little else but earning the money to get away. To London, Israel, Mount Everest, he said, anywhere, away, the farther the better.

But today's postcard bears a Canadian stamp. Written in flight, it is postmarked Toronto. In three months, Tom has seen England, Greece and Rome, nearly exhausted his savings, and decided there is no country like Canada to make money. Yet he refuses to come home to the prairies. 'Eastern Canada is as new to me as Europe,' he writes. 'Come visit me here when I've settled.' The words tell nothing Barry wants to know. They might have been written by a stranger. Tom ought to be here, there are many hours of darkness left.

Grey shadows move across the ceiling as a car turns at the corner and drives by the house. Roused from his half-sleep, Barry rolls his neck against the round back of the chair. He is aware of someone moving in the next room, filling a carton with empty beer bottles, then crossing the common room and lifting the needle from the record. Light from the streetlamp outside outlines the hair falling over her shoulders, and Barry recognizes Gloria. In the ringing silence, she sits on the arm of his chair and cradles her cold hands in his warm ones.

"You're up early," he says.

She laughs involuntarily. He can feel her muscles begin to relax. "I haven't been to bed." She rests her cheek against his forehead. "By the time I'd walked over to the residence, the door was locked." They both know she could have rung the bell and been let in by the matron. "Besides . . ." He looks up at her but she lowers her eyes. "I wanted to tell you I didn't mean all I said. It's just . . . I'm sorry . . . I get so frustrated--"

He touches his fingertips to her lips, and she hugs him with sudden intensity, sliding onto the chair beside him. Her tears surprise him. In short gasps she whispers apologies and explanations she must have rehearsed on her long cold walk. Barry quiets her with kisses, moved by the power of her emotion. He believes that she has walked all the way from the college to spare him a night of worry about her. She would expect as much of him.

"I love you," she whispers.

"I know. You don't have to explain." He could never really have doubted her. Gloria pulls back from him slightly, looking over her shoulder as if she imagines someone is watching, and, his hand in hers, she leads him silently up the stairs.

When Gloria travelled the TransCanada she wasn't, like Barry, trying to leave home behind. If she had known the concern she would cause her mother, she might not have gone. But she loved the French language and wanted to go to Quebec. The friend she visited in Calgary that summer was running away to Yorkville, so Gloria went with her. She came home to her parents' farm in the foothills before school started again, and they were so relieved they didn't punish her as they had meant to. 'Thank God nothing happened to you,' they said.

But of course they were wrong. Everything had changed. None of the boys in her school could interest her any,more: neither those with their own farms that they will still be farming in fifty years, nor the ambitious and naive ones. She and her few girlfriends were unlike the others. They knew love is above security or ambition. They loved Picasso and Beethoven and Leonard Cohen. As soon as she reached Bow College, Gloria applied to spend a year on a study exchange in France, and if she is chosen she will go next year. She is already helping Barry improve his French, hoping he will come with her. He could become a freelance writer, she tells him, and send articles home from the continent.

He began to fascinate her the day he told her he once sat upstairs at Shakespeare & Co. reading books and drinking tea, overlooking the rain-driven Seine. He recited Paris street names, and it was poetry to her. She wouldn't believe him, though, when he said he spent more time in Paris struggling for tenants' rights in the building where he stayed, than admiring great art. 'I want to show you all you've missed,' she said, then laughed at herself: she who has never been there.

They touch, taste, smell, worship with their bodies, and are drawn to one another even in sleep.

He dreams her as a bird, or a bird-woman, a goddess who motions to him from the end of a narrow, dusky street. He moves toward her, but as he approaches she fades from his sight. Where she was is only a pane of glass. Then he sees her at the end of another street; then another, and another. She watches him, waiting as he rushes from image to image.

Finally, the streets end. He stands on the shore of a frozen river, and sees her on the far shore, more beautiful than any of her images. Without hesitating, he steps onto the ice and begins to run toward her. He hears water bubbling beneath the ice, and takes his eyes off her a second to test his step. With a sound like bones snapping a crack leaps across the blue ice in front of him.

Date: 19.11.69

From: Dormouse

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

Preliminary Report on Subject

1. Since surveillance of students has heretofore focussed on the University of Calgary, intelligence on the subject and other Bow College activists is fragmentary.

2. However, the subject maintains a high profile as a student newspaper columnist and debater, so information is relatively reliable and easy to obtain.

3. The subject has been among the leaders of the 'student democracy' movement on campus, having, with others,

i) caused the postponement of closed Faculties Council meetings by refusing to vacate the council room;

ii) occupied college administrative offices in support of a radical professor's appeal against dismissal; and

iii) criticized college administration in newspaper columns for, among other things, refusing to help finance a student co-operative house.

4. The subject has attempted to involve students in political issues beyond their proper sphere by,

i) sponsoring the appearance of two American Black Panther leaders at a college forum (19.9.69);

ii) inviting a native Indian radical leader to the same forum;

iii) distributing left-wing literature through the college's Co-op Bookstore, including at least one pamphlet on Leo's current dangerous literature index (Dix propositions pour la liberation du Quebec, Montreal, undated); and

iv) used his newspaper columns to present radical analyses of such subjects as America's economic domination of Canada, and the war in Indo-China.

5. The subject has participated in at least five anti-war demonstrations in the city over the past two years (circled red in attached photographs, 5.i - 5.v).

6. The subject has recently been elected co-chairman of Calgarians Against the War. Rumors suggest that a left-moderate split in this group--the radicals threatening to withdraw support--may have been engineered by the subject in order to push the leadership to the left.

7. A source close to the subject reports that he often begins a statement with the phrase, "Ven comes der Revolution . . ."

8. Though known to members of all three groups, the subject is not aligned with C.P.C., C.P.C. (Marxist-Leninist), or the nascent Canadian Liberation Movement, nor has he sought membership or been invited to join any of these groups.

9. Local Communist groups regard the subject and his circle as 'lunatic fringers': bourgeois individualists without internal discipline or a consistent critique of Canadian society. They are described variously as "too stoned to struggle" and "in bed with the C.I.A."

10. However, as a public figure on campus, the subject is a potentially dangerous catalyst, who could be manipulated by Communist,

native, or other disruptive elements. In the words of a source close to him, "Some day [the subject] will do something crazy."

11. Further surveillance is recommended. Dormouse requests permission to recruit a full-time agent at Bow College.

5 enclosures

Date: 19.11.69

From: Albatross

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Acknowledge memo of 14.11.69 re subject.

2. Albatross records show subject has been overseas once, from 21.10.67 to 7.7.68.

3. Subject has travelled in Yugoslavia (2.68 to 3.68), Hungary (3.68), and Czechoslovakia (3.68). No known political contacts.

4. Herewith a photo clearly showing the subject (circled red) participating in an Anti-Fascist League demonstration in Rome, Italy, 5.6.68.

5. Identification of subject is 90% certain. Italian police records confirm, subject in Rome that date, but reveal no known political contacts.

6. Said demonstration (ref. para. 4 above) resulted in forty-two hospitalizations and the arrest of eighty-eight, not including the subject.

1 enclosure

Date: 1.12.69

From: Dormouse

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. A Casual Postal Survey on the subject has brought to light the following correspondence of interest:

i) Incoming: Envelope (postmark Toronto, no return address) containing xerox copies of the articles "The Real History of the Cold War" (Monthly Review, Summer, 1969), and "Be the First on Your Block to Build an A-Bomb". (The latter article, though not detailed for practical use, is known to be based on the M.I.T. research paper coded Omega.)

ii) Incoming: Personal letter (return address, General Delivery, Toronto), from Tom Gladstone, contributor of photography to Insurgence. (N.B. Envelope opened only because of presumed connection to item i) above.) Copy attached.

iii) Incoming: Subscription copies of Last Post, Canadian Dimension, and Our Generation, addressed to Insurgence, c/o the subject.

iv) Outgoing: Personal letter to Tom Gladstone, General Delivery, Toronto. Copy attached.

2. Permission requested--in light of incendiary tone and use of apparent code words by the subject in his personal letter--to continue Personal Postal Survey.

3. Due to staff shortages, Electronic Survey has not been possible to date. (N.B. Since the transfer of Dormouse AC2 to

Elephant's Ottawa office, efficiency here has declined approximately 50%. It is hoped a replacement will be assigned in all due haste.)

4. Recent recruitment of Dormouse AC7 on Bow College campus should improve quality of intelligence in this and other files.

2 enclosures

General Delivery
Toronto
November 26

Barry,

Sorry I haven't written earlier, at least to let you know I'm in the country. I did get the first letter you sent here, but I've been waiting to have good news to report. After some of the places I've been and people I've talked to, though, I think just being here is good news enough. Frankly, I'd rather be a boring Canadian than keep bored Europeans amused with stories of the oppression back home in Argentina or Iran or wherever. I don't find persecution one bit romantic.

I wish to hell I could find a job, naturally--that would really be homecoming--but so do thousands of people in this city. I have the idea I should be able to earn my living with my camera (though it's hard to prove, since the pictures I took in Europe are undeveloped, and will remain so till I get a job and make some money). But I'm willing to try other things--short of being a busboy again--and I'll go anywhere (can't say I exactly love Toronto on five dollars a day). When it comes down to it though, six percent unemployment doesn't mean that ninety-four percent of the people who need jobs can find them. As I told my Manpower counsellor, one job that I can see needs doing is to create a union for the unemployed, so they can pool their talents and hire them out, or at least give each other encouragement. She only chuckled, of course, having just landed this job herself. The essential thing about the unemployed is that no matter how many of them there are, they are always isolated, competing, not helping each other.

And I need help! In this cheap rooming house I found, where I can hardly help knowing all about my neighbors, every other person is an actor or artist of some kind, and most have been unemployed for months. I have to find work soon--I mean tomorrow--or I'll start falling into their syndrome. Call it the zen of do-nothing if you will, but to me it's a lingering disease.

I'm sorry, Barry, but I can't get excited about strikes and protests anymore. (My last protest march I got blisters on my feet. Can't the Vietnamese people see I've suffered enough?) Even if the war ends tomorrow, I can't believe anything will really change in the way we live. The ideal citizen will still be patient, passive, compliant, like someone waiting at a bus stop downtown.

Tonight I've been sitting up late with a kid from Sudbury, sharing his Export A's and thinking about you, Barry, and your theory about the schizophrenic influence of caffeine and nicotine on modern philosophy. (Don't we all need multiple personalities now, to keep our lives divided into safe compartments?) We talked about job prospects up north, and down here, and delivered critiques of pure hockey in an Export A priori haze of smoke till we became totally incoherent. Which is what this letter will become unless I stop writing now and get some sleep. Unless something develops here in the next few days, I'll be going up to some of those company towns to knock at the doors of union halls before the snow flies.

Best to all at home,

Tom

November 29

Tom,

So you touched down safely after all! I was beginning to wonder. Can't imagine why you want to stay down east--the light is so much better for picture-taking here--but I suppose there's a bigger demand for photographers where you are. Don't worry, you'll feel at home as soon as you have your first pay cheque. In the meantime, though, I might help by getting your film developed on the cheap here at the College; if, that is, you would trust it to the mail.

I can't buy your model of the ideal Canadian, Tom. Politically passive he may be, but patient and compliant? To me everyone seems restless, dissatisfied, acquisitive, led on from desire to desire by the advertising hype, obsessed with the illusion that some *thing* will make him happy. People have never had it so good, and all they can do is bitch. If the country has a credo it's "me first/*apres moi*".

There's a lot of talk about nationalism these days, but it seems misguided to me. Why take a company from an American capitalist only to give it to a Canadian capitalist? They all drink from the same bottle in the Bahamas anyway.

Quebec's nationalism is another thing, of course. We heard a lot about it last week around the newspaper office, from a highly unofficial delegation led by an ex-cop from Montreal, which is quietly laying down tracks across the country for its own underground railway. It seems *les flics* are coming down hard on riots and things there, so these people are trying to broaden their base. Gloria just about swallowed her Parisian accent trying to talk to them. There seems to be a kind of reverse snobbery at work; viz. they assume she looks down on their joual, so they call her 'une phony bourgeoise' and stick to an English learned mainly out of Marxist journals.

It was refreshing to see someone beat Sid at his own 'more-radical-than-thou' game. He still insinuates that separatism is reactionary, but he obviously admires the visitors' ability to believe in the immanent collapse of the government and establishment of a socialist Quebec. Let anybody else suggest such deviations and he won't let them go until they say, "There can be no Canadian revolution without a world revolution" three times while keeping a straight face. As for the Arrow, our Quebecois friends chuckle at Sid's little games--tarring Nixon, Imperial Oil and Student Council with the same brush--but insist, 'dans ce revolution-ci on mean business'.

Apparently, Tom, you don't think I mean business. But I'm going ahead with the 'pacification strikes' I told you about, even if I'm on my own. I'm sick of talking and having no one listen. Maybe the peace movement bores you, but you can be sure the war makers aren't bored. We're all victims of the war economy, and until people realize that, there will always be those who want war because they think there's something to win.

The last protest march hasn't been totally forgotten here. You remember Smoky, the guy who got arrested. He was cleared, of course, once the police got their stories straight. But since spending the night in jail he has discovered that there's more to being a war resister than playing the Jimi Hendrix version of the Star-Spangled Banner. He has joined the newspaper staff, and now eggs Sid on in his loudmouth. . .

call it his jawbone radicalism. Which shows how much good the cops do by trying to get tough.

It's hard to know who your friends are anymore. Yesterday, Professor Humboldt tried to cheer me up by telling me the war is bound to end soon. Here's his cheery reason: The U.S. can't afford a conventional war in Vietnam much longer, he says, because it has to build up its nuclear arsenal to keep pace with the Soviets, who have no peoples' movement to slow them down.

But don't let me bore you with my worries. It's not that I don't sympathize with your troubles, Tom. It's hard to know what to do for your country when your country doesn't know what to do with you. But you don't need me to help you feel sorry for yourself. You'll make it, I'm sure. And when you do, don't forget your home town. Come visit us.

Good luck,

Barry

Date: 2.12.69

From: Elephant

To: Dormouse

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Acknowledge report on subject dated 1.12.69.

2. N.B. Interception of personal correspondence within Canada is strictly prohibited by law. All intelligence related to such practice MUST be classified SECRET.

3. Permission to continue Postal Survey on subject granted, but parameters of surveillance are not to be expanded until full attention has been paid to the following points.

4. Re the "ex-cop from Montreal" alluded to in subject's letter of 29.11.69: Dormouse has been grossly incompetent in failing to report this development by more direct means. A full explanation is expected immediately.

5. A full report on "our Quebecois friends" (Subject: Underground Railway) should be given absolute top priority.

Date: 2.12.69

From: Elephant

To: Leo

Subject: Dormouse AC1

1. Herewith, further documentation of the subject's mismanagement in a sensitive post (ref. Subject: Barry MacDonald 1.12.69).

2 Enclosed documents provide a further instance of breach of established policy; viz. the subject instigated a Personal Postal Survey without proper authorization.

3. Documents also demonstrate a serious error in judgment; viz. the subject failed to bring to Elephant's immediate attention the matter of the "ex-cop from Montreal" (ref. Subject: Underground Railway).

4. Documents show that the subject continues to excuse his own administrative inadequacy by blaming all on the transfer of Dormouse AC2.

5. The aforesaid projection (ref. para. 4 above) shows once again the extent to which the subject has in the past depended on Dormouse AC2 to meet his (the subject's) responsibilities.

6. Recommend the appointment of an experienced Elephant agent to Dormouse AC2's vacant post, to observe the subject and prevent him from endangering Dormouse and Elephant objectives.

4 enclosures

# THE REVOLUTION'S NEW CLOTHES

Clickety-click clickety-clack clackety-click clackety-clack. The Bow College press clicks out ghostly grey letters and the ghost of a satellite photo of the earth on sheet after sheet of blue paper. Clickety-click clickety-clack--Students Strike for Peace--clackety-click clackety-clack. As Barry watches from the counter, Linda the young printer adjusts the fluid level to bring back the dark outlines to the words. Students Strike for Peace. Clickety-click clickety-clack. She goes to the back storeroom and returns with more paper, smiling at him as if she hasn't read the words she is printing.

"The strike is for staff too," Barry shouts over the noise of the press, wishing she wouldn't act so nervous around him. "Staff and Students Strike for Peace would have been too long, but staff are invited to join." Linda continues to smile busily, as if she hasn't heard. "It'd only be for a few hours during exam week. You wouldn't have to lose your job."

Linda throws back her head in a silent laugh--"I get it"--and turns back to tend the machine. Maybe she really can't hear him, or is too shy to say what she thinks.

'Standing in the street; and what does that change?' The question is always the same--from Sid, from Barry's father, from the interminable articles and TV shows--and the clanking press is Barry's only answer. What else can he do? Drop out, drop out. The hippie slogan drones in the back of his head, but he knows 'drop out' is the one commandment it is impossible to obey. Even apathy is a political act, and a dangerous one.

Of course it is senseless to stand in the street if after an hour you drive home in your gas guzzler to watch yourself on TV. As long as every penny you spend, every bite you eat goes to feed the system that brings you organized murder along with the demonstrations every night on the news, standing in the street changes nothing. But at least it is better than working, earning, spending; killing as you live, vicariously. Yet even Gloria tells him he is crazy to be going through with this strike. It's fine, it's with it, to be against the war and all that. Only don't get too serious about it. Don't run any risks.

The printing press shuts off with a clank and slowly winds down. Linda bends carelessly to take the posters out of the basket, her miniskirt riding up at the back. Still smiling, she rings up a Student Union discount without asking what club is sponsoring the work. "Good luck," she says. So she does understand! You're on your own, she means, but good luck.

Barry tucks the package of posters under his arm and skips up the stairs. He runs jacketless across the windy plaza toward the Student Centre. No one would seriously ask people to stand in the street on a day like today. Fists clenched against the cold, he tries two doors, finds the third one open, and hurries into the warmth with one more poster to compete for wall space with those for the Snow Queen Ball.

A roar of laughter meets him along with a gust of warm air from the lobby, and here, massed around Speaker's Corner, is the crowd of students he has hoped to see standing in the streets on strike against the war. A debate is in session, the last before tomorrow's referendum on membership in the Canadian Union of Students. The banner draped across the stairwell reads,

RESOLVED: STUDENTS SHOULDN'T C.U.S.

But the union is already a lost cause. Most students are too timid to support student democracy, so how many will vote for student power? Even Sid, whose support for C.U.S. sealed its fate on Bow campus, has given up argument. From Speaker's Corner, all the way up the stairwell past three crowded balconies he is braying the cuss words he says students should use, all of them. And his audience is hanging over the bannisters, going ape with laughter. Despite his unpopular views, or because of them, Sid has become almost a folk hero on campus: the one person everybody loves to hate.

Barry nods to a few friends, but can't see Gloria. So when Sid is cut off by the referee's bell in mid-sh-- and an affirmative speaker approaches the podium for rebuttals, Barry clutches his package under his arm and runs up the back stairway toward the newspaper office.

A sign on the open office door declares,

THIS PLACE IS A DUMP!
General Cleanup, Friday 3 p.m.

There is a cleanup every week, but since people are in a hurry, Friday afternoons, to find an empty table at the Wales, the worst of the mess has become permanent. Barry passes the sagging chesterfield piled high with jackets, sweaters, and trays of dirty dishes, and crosses to his table. The staff is out on the balcony watching the debate, except for Zak, who cuts an impressive figure standing behind his desk in a shiny blue three-piece suit. Despite the blond hair all but hiding his gold earring, he looks like the kind of man people vote for.

"Don't tell me you've sold out, Zak?"

"Never, man." He pulls down the cuffs of his white shirt. "I'm just on my way to City Hall to see what filth I can dig up on that urban renewal story. Figure this'll open more doors than my buckskin?"

"Sure, you look like Peter Lougheed grown a foot."

Zak flashes him a manic grin. "Hey Barry, you're just the dude we're looking for."

We? At last Barry notices two young people slumped on chairs in the corner, watching him with blank, sleepy faces. By the look of their big knapsacks and mud-spattered coats, they are hitchhikers out of season.

"We got a couple lost sheep here," Zak says. "Will you help them?"

"If I can . . . Is Gloria around?"

Zak shrugs, and seeing Barry's parcel takes it from him and tears it open. "New posters?" When he sees the message on the blue paper, he flops into his swivel chair laughing.

"What's so funny?" But Barry knows that laugh. It is the bray Zak uses to ridicule anything that is not with it.

"Hey, I'm not putting you down," Zak tells him smiling at some private joke. "I mean, do your own thing and all that shit. Thing is . . . you're in exactly the same space I was in two years ago." He makes 'two years ago' sound antediluvian. "You know, I said like, wow man, I gotta do something, like now."

"So what do you do?" Barry waves impatiently at the mushroom cloud poster behind Zak. "Learn to love the bomb?"

Zak laughs again--the unanswerable dismissal--and stands up to put on a tweed overcoat. He has done something. He has come to Canada. But that hasn't made the Death Machine skip a single beat. Calgary may seem like the frontier to him, but it is not. The news takes not a second longer to reach here than any other city in the world. What makes it easier, here, to sit back and carp without doing anything?

"Well, I have to split," Zak says. "You're not on strike today are you?" Barry shakes his head, and Zak motions toward the couple who have been watching them listlessly. "These kids just hitched in from Van," he says. "I told them they could crash at the Co-op, but they're kind of out of it. Don't even know south from north."

Heaving himself to his feet the dark-eyed boy, wearing a muddy black leather jacket, grips Barry's fist in a hippie handshake. "I'm Nance," he says in a voice much softer than Barry expects. "We're on our way to Regina."

The girl nods timidly. "To open a mission." She smiles vaguely around the office, at no one in particular. Her round cherubic face looks too young for her to be out of school.

"This is Nanda," her friend says. "We meant to stay at the Meditation Centre, but--"

"It burned down," Zak laughs his donkey laugh. "Somebody burning incense in bed."

Nance tilts his head wearily and hooks his thumbs in his belt loops. Barry tries to imagine him in a full lotus position, but he looks as if he would be more at home on a motorcycle.

"Anyway Barry, I have to split," Zak repeats, heading for the door. "Can you take them to the Co-op? That Navy guy and his chick should've moved out by now, so there's room in the basement."

The word 'chick' reminds Barry he is supposed to meet Gloria. He has heard her correct people's sexist language so often he has almost started to do it himself. "I'll have to leave Gloria a note first--"

"You're a good shit, Barry," Zak calls on his way out of the office. "Catch you later."

Zak is always extending the Co-op's hospitality: to new refugees from the States, people he has met in his travels, or, as today, people who simply look lost. For all the hassle it can cause in the house, though, Barry wouldn't want him to change. After writing a few words on a slip of paper and leaving it on Gloria's part of the counter, Barry takes some of the posters and a stapler, and leaves the office, the two meditators following like stray dogs.

Nance and Nanda are apostles of the divine light, and in Calgary this afternoon the light is truly divine. New-fallen snow on lamp standards and car rooftops is shining back at the dazzling sun. While Barry fastens his blue posters to every wooden post or fence he passes, the tires of cars and trucks on the wet pavement whisper, krishnakrishna-krishnakrishna.

Bundled in a bulky army coat, Nanda sets the pace as they cross the bridge at Tenth Street, little more than her two bright eyes showing over her scarf. She explains that she is a devotee of Krishna, and Krishna is the supreme personality of the godhead. This seems to answer all questions for her. She has decided to open a mission in Regina, so she is going there at the risk of being caught in a blizzard, without plans or contacts, trusting she will be taken care of all the way.

While Nanda walks ahead, eyes raised in a kind of trance, Barry asks Nance why he hasn't shaved his head. "In this country?" When Barry smiles, Nance hastens to add, "I mean, O.K. Those guys are blessed. But like, Krishna may be the supreme personality of the godhead and all that, but he's still only one manifestation. Know what I mean? The godhead is unmanifest."

"You mean the life-force, that drives the sun, the river, animals and people, all the same?"

"No, no. You've got it all backwards."

Feeling out of his depth talking metaphysics, Barry lets the subject drop. You may as well say the revolution is unmanifest. The thing is, not to leave it that way. Nance, though, appears willing to let the godhead remain inarticulate, and talk about himself. While he never owned a motorcycle, neither has he always been an apostle. He picked up his name in his street-fighting days, and it has stuck with him since. For awhile he was a doper, quit school, didn't do much of anything until he discovered Krishna, and his life hasn't been the same since.

"Like, there's brahman in everything, man," he says as they leave the bridge and Barry leads them toward the Co-op. "When we look behind the appearance and see the brahman, then everything changes for us. Everything's nice." Nanda mumbles that it's nice when everything's nice, and Nance agrees. Barry staples the last of the posters he brought with him to the door of the old fire hall, and they walk on in silence, watching the pavement in front of their feet.

The Co-op is a three-storey red-brick house among smaller bungalows a block from the river, but though it is sometimes called People's Palace, it is hardly palatial. The settling that warps the floors inside has caused a narrow crack in the brick exterior. In Barry's third-floor window, Gloria has replaced the familiar red maple leaf flag with a curtain made out of a tie-dyed sheet which can be pushed to one side to allow more light into the room. Barry has agreed to this and all the changes she has made--he thought appearances didn't matter to him--but from the sidewalk outside he can now see the dingy ceiling, which makes the room look like an empty eye-socket.

Barry leads Nance and Nanda through the dark hall into the narrow front room where they slip their packsacks to the floor and remove boots and coats. Though the room is hardly used except for parties, it has two swaybacked couches that have been dragged out of alleys. Leaving the girl to struggle with her pack, Nance drops onto the longer couch and sighs noisily. "I've had it," he says. "Right here is nice."

Nanda nods to Barry, eases her pack to the floor, and takes from one of its side pockets a gold-framed picture of Lord Krishna playing a flute. This she places in the plaster-front false fireplace and sits facing it.

Barry follows the scent of coffee into the kitchen, and is pouring himself a mug when the door from the back stairway bursts open, and little Amy races in. "Hi Barry," she squeals, bumping into him. "Dja see Gloria?"

"No, is she here?"

Amy grins at his eager reply, and he wonders if she is teasing him. Zak, having endured months of Sid's anti-monogamist barbs, has begun to rib Barry, and Amy, as always, imitates him. "Tell you for a quarter."

"Never mind. I'll find out for myself."

"She's in Mom's room," Amy says, holding out her hand hopefully. Barry finds a stick of gum in his shirt pocket, and when he gives it to her, she stands on a chair, throws her arms around his neck and plants a wet kiss on his cheek. "Don't tell Zak I kissed you. He's jealous." She runs into the common room, where Barry can see her, on his way upstairs, putting on the earphones and sinking into an overstuffed chair.

Some days when everyone is taking things too seriously, Amy keeps the Co-op from falling apart. Like when Zak put too many hot peppers in the chili, and she prevented a full-scale revolution by making a plateful of peanut-butter and banana sandwiches. If only everyone around the newspaper office had her common sense, they might accomplish something, rather than going over and over the litany of revolutionary theory until it turns into nonsense syllables.

Reaching the landing, Barry hears Gloria's laughter from Zak's and Margot's room, and approaches the half-open door. He wishes he had saved one of his posters to show Gloria. The room is cluttered without being claustrophobic. A big Mexican blanket hangs on the wall facing the door, and another covers the worn hide-a-bed. On other walls are rope weavings, batik hangings, lithographs and oil paintings, all by Margot or friends and classmates of hers. Gloria sits crosslegged, winding a strand of her hair around her fingers, on a small Persian rug beside Margot, at a low table inlaid with many shades and varieties of wood.

Standing in the doorway he hears Margot exclaim, "Like, Barry's far-out, Gloria. I mean really far-out but, he can go off on these heavy trips and you don't know--"

Gloria sees him and springs to her feet, smiling, drawing him by the hand into the room. "Barry, you'll have tea with us won't you?"

He raises his half-full coffee mug in answer, but sits with her at the table, his eyes on hers as if they are alone. "Talking behind my back again?"

"Margot was just reading your horoscope." Gloria winks. "She says we're not compatible."

"Horrors! I wish you hadn't told us. We might have been perfectly happy."

Turning the pages of a big clothbound book, Margot ignores Barry. "No, I mean like . . . You're right on the Sagittarius cusp; aren't you Barry?"

"Oh excuse me!" He shifts his weight, looking at the floor. "I thought I was on the rug."

"All right for you." The corners of Margot's mouth quiver. "It doesn't matter if you don't believe in it. It's worked for thousands of years without you. Now, what time of day were you born?"

Barry smiles at Gloria. "At the witching hour, just before midnight. I'll be twenty-one on the twenty-first."

"That's really freaky," Margot says, wide-eyed. " I mean far-out, but freaky. I get this really strong message, Barry, like, watch out for Leo. And Gloria's pure Leo."

Barry looks at Gloria, his mouth open as if shocked. "You didn't tell me!"

"I couldn't see it either, at first," Margot continues. "But it's all there."

Barry squeezes Gloria's arm and cheek to make sure. "I'm all here, all right," she says smiling. "But it just shows there's nothing to this astrology business."

"Oh, you're wrong there," Barry tells her. "The business, I believe in. You know how many of those books they sell?"

Margot slaps her book shut and throws Barry a furious look. "All right, I get the message. You won't believe anything unless it punches you in the nose will you?"

"Snap out of it, Margot." Barry snaps his fingers in front of her face, but she bats his hand away. "I know these are heavy times, but it doesn't solve anything to blame your problems on the stars or spirits or . . . You're just trying to escape from reality--"

"I'm escaping?" Margot cries. "You're the unreal one. Burning your draft card, standing in the street. I suppose that's reality. . ."

"I never had a draft card." Barry stands up to leave. He regrets getting into this argument, but he couldn't stop himself.

"Come on, Barry," Gloria pleads, "let's not get started on this."

"We're finished with it, as far as I'm concerned," says Margot, pouring herself more tea and refusing to look at him.

"All right, you tell fortunes, read tea leaves. It's none of my business," he says, going to the door. "Just leave Gloria out of it. One psycho in the house is plenty." He knows as he walks away that he shouldn't have made that last remark. But Margot's supernatural garbage infuriates him. Doesn't she have enough real problems? Why can't she deal with things on their own terms? Why do people have to make more trouble for themselves by dodging their responsibility for making decisions? They'd rather leave it to the stars, the spirits, anything, so they can say, 'See, it's not me who fucked up; it's fate.' So they will always be fucked up, like Barry's father, who did all his living during the war and blames it for everything that has happened to him since. A few drinks and it is the only life for a man: war. A few more and it is the reason he never made anything of his life; the reason to have a few more and a few more. He could accept being shot at, but has never adjusted to the fact he wasn't killed.

When Barry enters his and Gloria's room his nostrils tingle from her scented soaps on the dresser. He sees that she has piled his books, which lay open on the floor, in a neat stack on the desk, his place marked in each of them by a strip of paper. He had a list of things to do on one of those papers. He is always losing his lists--he knows that--but now he imagines Gloria has thrown it out in her tidying. Useless anger pounds in him like a caged animal, with no one to strike out at but the one he wants only to love.

He turns to go downstairs and see if the Herald has arrived yet, and finds Gloria standing in the door, watching him with a sympathetic look he resents. Softly, without reproach, she says, "I waited for you at the Student Centre. Where were you?"

"I wasn't very late," he snaps. "I found one guy willing to join the strike. And I picked up my posters at the printers. I wanted you to see them--"

"Oh, strike, strike, strike!" Her voice rises too now, and he is almost pleased. "Barry! Can't you forget about that strike? Don't you realize what you're doing? It's suicide! _Faut-il toujours répéter les sottisses de soixante-huit_?"

"_Sottisses_!" She has taught him a few phrases in French, romantic phrases. But this he recognizes as something else. "You sit there listening to Margot's hocus pocus, and you talk about my _sottisses_? It's a fucking _sottisse_ to want peace? To want to _do_ something?"

She turns away from him and picks up her brush from the dresser as if she intends to throw it. "You want to do something? All right, go ahead, do something, but _think_ about it first . . . Do something that makes sense. Don't just throw away your year because you think you ought to do something."

They have been through this argument too many times already. Barry yells back at her, but he knows what she will say. She will tell him that an isolated act of rebellion is meaningless, no one will even hear about it if it happens in Calgary; besides, he hasn't had time to organize a proper strike; why doesn't he wait, strike some other time; don't be stupid enough to boycott exams. What she says may be true, but her truth outrages him. He won't change now. Why can't she see the strike is an assault on all the outmoded values that make the war possible? If it's a small gesture now, it will grow; it has to.

At last, Gloria throws up her hands and her voice drops to a quiet intensity. "You're just like the emperor in the story, Barry. Your revolution doesn't have any clothes on."

Barry, about to yell back something equally absurd, stops himself and laughs. He pictures Sid and Smoky as the tailors, unrolling bolt after bolt of nothing but hot air; and himself, parading naked. He knows his gesture won't change the world; that can't stop him, but--Gloria's image does more than all her arguments to make him think again. He goes on laughing until she laughs with him, her eyes moist. He draws her to him, and tries to kiss, but she hugs him tight to her.

"Oh I wish," she murmurs into his chest, "sometimes I wish I could have all of you." But as Barry backs toward the bed, she pulls herself free and stands at the open door. "Right now I need coffee," she says, "how about you?"

"No!" But when she goes on down the stairs, he calls after her, "O.K. I'll have coffee."

"Come downstairs for it."

Despite the continual talk about everything being up front, the Co-op has become a breeding ground for festering grudges and conflicts. Whenever the members get together, Barry notices Gloria becoming tense and quiet. Yet he can't believe she is serious when she talks about moving out of the house.

Before supper, Andrea arrives home exhausted from studying, and causes a scene because the girlfriend of the Navy guy--who hasn't moved out as expected--is monopolizing the bathroom and won't come out. At the dinner table, having finally got in to take a quick shower, Andrea complains of finding long black hairs clogging the drain, until the girl throws down her fork and runs tearfully to the bathroom where she locks herself in again. Andrea apologizes to the others, but is reassured by Jan and Frances, who make a habit of complaining about crashers.

Undisturbed by such trivialities, Barry devours a double helping of curried chicken, while the divine light apostles fill up on rice, and Nance tells anyone who will listen about the souls of chickens.

Margot, though she cooked dinner, won't sit down. She stands by the dining room window waiting for Zak and his Navy friend, and badgers Amy for stuffing a whole slice of bread into her mouth.

"He knows what time supper is supposed to be," Margot mutters. "He was gonna help me."

"You never can trust a Taurus," Barry tells her.

"Oh, shut up for once."

"Calm down and eat," he says. "I'm sure Zak's all right. They probably stopped off at the bar."

"I know damn well he's all right. I just want to be waiting when he walks in that door." Gloria puts her hand on Barry's to stop him from answering. It is frightening to see what has happened to Margot in the three months she has lived in the house. The worst is, she knows what she is doing. She isn't boiling over with rage, she is simmering it, keeping it ready till Zak gets home.

"There's the phone," she says, as if she thinks the others haven't heard it. "If it's that bastard . . ."

She returns disappointed from the kitchen. "It's for you Barry. Sid. He says it's an emergency."

## ELECTRONIC SURVEY I

Subject: Barry MacDonald (289-1871)

Transcript no.: 1

Date: 9.12.69

Time: 18:43:41

1. hello/ Co-op/

2. Barry/ what the hell took you/ this is an emergency/

1. another one Sid/ everything's an emergency in your books/

2. listen up/ Minor went to the printer's today/ didn't like what he saw of tomorrow's issue/

1. yeah/ and so/

2. so he cancelled the order/ in the middle of the fucking run/ seized the plates/ everything/

1. what/

2. the Arrow/ it's shut down/

1. but tomorrow's paper/

2. it'll never come out/ Student Council banned it/

1. but/ they can't do that/

2. it's done/ of course they have to O.K. it at tonight's council meeting/ and while they're at it/ they're planning to fire us/ the whole damn staff/

1. we'll see about that/

2. good/ you'll be there/

1. damn right I'll be there/ Minor can't get away with it/

2. no/ I expect his stooges will vote against him this time/

1. we'll make them regret it anyway/

2. that's it/ and say listen/ I want to get out another issue while
we still have a budget/ this City Hall thing is about to break
wide open/ and I just got another pile of stuff from Quebec/

1. you mean right away/ before Christmas/

2. I mean like now/ just as soon as we can find another printer/ one
we can trust/ what do you say/

1. well/ sure if we can/

2. if Minor doesn't like it/ we'll call it Insurgence Two/ I don't
give a shit/ it has to come out/ that's all/ are you with me/

1. of course/

2. good/ now get everybody you can out to that meeting tonight/ let's
give them an audience they'll never forget/

1. right/ I'll talk to you tonight/

2. be there early/

1. will do/

2. see you/

1. right/

Time: 18:45:12

# THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Whatever Gloria thinks of the Arrow's revolution, she won't stand by and let it be suppressed, and Barry is glad to learn that--apart from Amy, Nance and Nanda, who neither understand nor care what is going on--the others at the table feel more or less the same way. Andrea is furious that she, a council member, wasn't notified when Minor shut down the press. Within minutes she drives off to pick up the only other councillor she can count on to vote against the move.

"Minor's order is illegal," she says on her way out the door, "unless Council votes it through tonight."

To Margot, however, news of the censorship comes as a relief. Now that she knows Zak won't be home for hours, she leaves her vigil at the window and begins to eat whatever food is left on the table. "Thank God," she says between mouthfuls, "somebody's finally got the guts to give that rag the end it deserves." Zak had nothing to do with the newspaper when she met and fell in love with him, and since Sid adopted him as a kind of celebrity--the resident war-refugee--she has looked on the Arrow as her rival.

Gloria slides her arm around Barry as they leave the house together, and walks with a carefree swing of the hips, as if she has forgotten both the conflicts left behind in the Co-op and the ones that await them at the College. The light wind blows snow from the branches of trees beside the river, scattering fine crystals that drift by them as if free of gravity. Gloria talks about her family on the farm south of the city. She will have to go home, she says, as soon as her exams are finished.

"My sister Donna says Mom had a fit when she got my letter and found out I'd moved out of residence. She's heard all kinds of stories about what goes on in those communes." Gloria's amused tolerance doesn't hide the fondness in her voice whenever she speaks of home, even when she complains of the town's backwardness. She tells him about one horrid night she spent with her sister and two friends while their husbands played poker in the kitchen. "I was so bored and depressed . . . Linda, Sue and Donna, drinking beer in front of the TV . . ."

Barry laughs. "Lucy in the Sky with Dishpan hands."

Gloria says she couldn't bear to stay, like her sister, in that ranching town. "She got married too young, had kids, and now she's trapped." Yet Barry suspects Gloria feels less out-of-place there than in the newspaper office.

Her talk of family makes him wish his mother and Liz weren't so far away. Whenever he thumbs the five-hundred miles to Regina, or rides the Greyhound overnight to see them, Mom gets so excited she wants to do everything for him, and he ends up telling her to leave him alone, and going for long walks by himself. He often passes his father's rooming house, but they can go for months without meeting, and feel little more than mutual dread when they do.

Barry hoped--and for the first few weeks dared to believe--that the Co-op would grow into a kind of family. No, he expected more. It is too much like his own family now, with bickering, suspicion, and unwillingness to give more than one's fair share. It seems naive to have expected anything different. Yet, he has to expect more of his own generation than of past ones, or how will the world ever change?

"Nobody else thinks of the Co-op the way you do," Gloria says. "It's just a place. Everybody's moving out in the summer, or next year. They don't see why they should put so much into it. And neither do I. You talk as if it'll be there forever."

"We'll none of us be here forever. Is that any reason we shouldn't care?"

As they lean over the railing of the bridge and watch ice float silently by on the river, Gloria reminds him of their plans to go to Europe together. "I wish we were leaving right now," she says. "I'd like to be free to drift away like that. Away from all this." Her eyes follow the floating ice into the distant darkness, as if she can see those places she has dreamed of, and the grey light of the streetlamps softens the lines of her face. Barry watches her, enjoying this moment of peace he knows cannot last.

From the moment they enter the Student Centre, they are caught up in the turmoil of the Council meeting. Though it is long before eight o'clock, the gallery of the classroom-sized council chamber is packed with spectators. Students, professors, alumni, deans and hangers-on, all have rallied to the cause of press freedom, whether or not they support the Arrow's staff. They crowd around the U-shaped council table and block the door so the councillors themselves can't enter.

Although Barry doesn't see Sid in the crowd, Zak is there, having changed out of his suit into blue denim. "Think the meeting will be postponed?" he calls to Barry over the heads of the students between them.

"If it is, Minor's order is invalid. The printing can go ahead."

Zak starts to tell Barry what he learned this afternoon at City Hall. "Basically, everything I wrote in my last article is true, I can prove it now." He says a few people stand to make millions by knowing in advance where a new development will be announced. "One of the dudes I named turns out to be on the College Board of Governors. What dya bet that's why they're suddenly so hot to stop the Arrow from coming out?"

Barry shrugs. He had thought that, for once, the censorship provided a clear-cut issue everyone could agree on. But it seems nothing is that simple.

"There's a certain block of old houses," Zak continues, "that if you buy now--" But his voice is drowned out by the crowd.

Suddenly a roar of boos arises from around the chamber door, and Barry glimpses Mark Minor trying to push his way inside. When it becomes obvious there is no room, he calls for silence again and again until the noise subsides. Slicking his hair down nervously, Minor shouts that his council meetings are always open, and he believes that no one who wants to observe should be turned away. This statement is met by jeers of derision. In order to accommodate the large crowd, Minor continues, Council is moving its meeting to the Teaching Theatre.

So, hot and irritable already, from crowding together in heavy coats and sweaters, the protesters shuffle out of the chamber and up the stairs. Smoky accosts Barry to discuss tactics for the evening, and they become separated from Gloria. Barry catches sight of her with Andrea on the third floor balcony, then loses her again when word comes down that the Theatre is already occupied by a Film Society audience, and that they must go back downstairs to the gymnasium.

Barry waits at the bottom of the staircase, the gym echoing with the sound of tables being scraped across the floor, until finally Gloria appears among the stragglers, and they go in together.

"It looks hopeless," she tells him. "Minor's friends will vote just as he tells them. Andrea can't change their minds." It is no news to Barry. He continues to look for Sid, but there is no sign of him.

The janitors have pushed tables into a large U for the councillors, ? and with a deafening clamor, are setting up folding chairs on three sides, enough for all the observers. As he crosses the darkened gym toward the table, over which three banks of flourescent lights have been turned on, Barry is reminded of a boxing ring, which may prove appropriate. If the councillors want to kill the Arrow, no number of spectators can stop them. But he for one intends to give them a fight.

Squeezing his hand, Gloria asks him to sit near the back of the gallery, but Smoky waves to them maniacally, and points to two chairs he is saving for them at the front. The crowd is rowdy and impatient, and when the councillors put in their appearance at last, they are met by derisive cheers and raspberries. The Arrow staff leads chants of "Shame, shame" and "Resign" that obviously confuse the councillors. For a moment, there seems to be hope that their votes will change.

As Minor bangs the table repeatedly with his gavel for order, Barry finally spots Sid sitting by himself in a back row, looking on smug and detached.

Council President Minor stands under the basket, pounding for order, staring straight across the key at the forces of the Arrow, amassed on the foul line. When he is finally able to call the meeting to order, he subjects most of the spectators to their first taste of the insufferable boredom of council meetings. He prolongs the reading of the minutes by making corrections and additions involving a lengthy, and undoubtedly planned, discussion with Al Waters, his Vice-President. After dragging out other items of old business, Minor dismisses Andrea's motion to advance the newspaper affair to the top of the agenda, and instead plods through a series of routine measures. The Arrow staff is accustomed to these delays, but the other spectators soon become restless and steadily increase the pace and volume of their heckling.

Once, Gloria stands and signals with her arms for the crowd to be quiet, but Barry tells her simply to wait. "The councillors can see it's not our doing," he says. "Half of them are thinking of re-election. Let them hear the voice of the people."

He is ready, however, when the newspaper finally comes up on the agenda. As Minor turns over the floor to Waters to detail the charges, Smoky, Zak and Barry lead a rush of hecklers up to the table, shouting, "Shut up, shut up Waters, sit down."

Minor, hammering with his gavel, only adds to the confusion. "Order, order, order."

When the hall has returned to the relative quiet of a shouting match between Zak and Waters, Barry shouts, "Mr. Chairman. This is a demonstration, Mr. Chairman, of what Student Council is trying to do to the Arrow."

"Order, order. You'll have your chance to speak, but now Mr. Waters has the floor."

The noise continues, and Barry persists. "It cost you two-hundred bucks to keep tomorrow's paper from being released, Mr. Chairman. Justify that if you can."

"It's worth every penny to shut you up," Minor shouts, and is met by more jeers and cat-calls. "Order. Order, I say. Another outburst like this and I'll clear the hall." He has more to say, but his voice is lost amid the reaction of the crowd.

"Silence us," students roar. "Censor us too. Shame, shame."

"Shut! Up!" Minor has entirely lost the composure with which he opened the meeting. He flattens his hair with his hand, revealing dark areas of sweat under the arms of his checked shirt. Barry looks back at Sid, who remains calm in the background, arms crossed on his chest, chuckling to himself. This is perhaps the one triumph he could expect from this meeting.

Clearly, all hope of making Council postpone its decision is gone. As Waters proposes his motion, he meets only token heckling, all having been spent in one cathartic outburst. He makes no reference at all to the Arrow's continued attacks on Student Council, mentioning specifically only one article on the C.U.S. referendum, which he says should not be published on voting day. But he speaks mainly in general terms, declaring that the Arrow has failed to live up to its responsibilities by ignoring many of the needs of the campus and favoring the interests of a small minority. Another chorus of boos arises to prove it is not such a small minority, but Waters refuses to argue. He waits coolly until the noise subsides, then accuses the Arrow's editor of rejecting articles by students whose views differ from his own, and of harassing these students until they have no choice but to resign. This charge receives a quieter reaction from the spectators, many of whom have little sympathy for Sid, though they wouldn't say he has no right to choose his own staff. In the lull, Barry hears Sid's high-pitched laughter.

As soon as Waters has finished speaking, Andrea is on her feet, calling for the President's attention, but Minor recognizes instead another of his friends, who expands at length on the charges against the newspaper, without adding much to what has been said. Another councillor recommends that publication be suspended until after the Christmas break when, he says, cooler heads will prevail. Minor reiterates, however, that the motion is to dismiss the staff, not to suspend it.

When Andrea is finally allowed to speak, she argues for the release of the copies that had already been printed before the stop-work order this afternoon. Once again Minor has the pleasure of ruling her out of order. Seeming to think he has weathered the storm, he leans back complacently in his chair and blows cigarette smoke through the webbing of the basket above him.

As one by one Minor's stooges have their say, the crowd becomes restless again. Voices call for Council to resign, and constantly make jokes at the speakers', and one another's, expense.

Gloria chews at the ends of her hair in frustration. "Let's go," she whispers to Barry. "It's senseless to sit through this farce."

But at last Minor, making a display of fair play, throws the discussion open to members of the gallery. He recognizes a meek-looking girl who, as soon as she has the floor, defers to Zak. Minor groans, deliberately loud, and rests his head in his hands, but does not interrupt as Zak expounds the Arrow's philosophy of journalism.

Zak once told Barry that he had played the part of Daniel Webster in a high school play. He draws on the experience now. Though his rhetoric and gestures are a little overdone for Barry's taste, Zak obviously has a positive effect on the audience. The newspaper never caters to the lowest-common-denominator, he says proudly, but tries to educate the public as to its rights and responsibilities. The speech is a repetition, to a large extent of the clichés Sid has been feeding his staff from the beginning of the year, but Zak is able to breath new life into them. Just this afternoon, Barry asked him, 'So what do you do?' Now his answer seems obvious. You expose illegal speculation, you explain why the economy is self-destructive, you visit the Indians and the poor and give your voice to the voiceless. If only you don't become too impatient and lose faith, writing itself is doing. If you can't change people's minds, nothing else you do will matter.

"All right, all right, you're not on stage now," Minor cries at last. "Now tell me what's educational about calling Student Council a pack of clowns."

"It's not our policy to ridicule anyone," Zak retorts. "Unless, of course, they make themselves ridiculous." Though he has resisted sarcasm until now, his final remark loses any votes he might have swayed his way.

A number of hands wave, and Barry stands up to talk, but Minor recognizes the Dean of Women, who reads emotionally a passage from John Stuart Mill. ("Not a Bow College student, I bet," Minor cracks.) It is obvious from the expressionless, mechanical faces around the Council table, that hardly anyone is listening anymore. They are simply waiting for the vote to be taken so they can go home. Minor gives Barry the floor, showing not how open-minded he is, but how confident of the outcome of the voting.

Barry has almost decided there is no sense in saying anything, but when he starts speaking his anger overcomes him. "Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I'm one of the curious. I wonder what you're so afraid to let us read. What's your dark secret? Why are you in such a hurry to dispose of your opposition before next term's election? What can you possibly have to hide that is worth setting a precedent like this? I don't suppose we can stop you tonight, but the question I'm asking myself, and all Bow students ought to be asking, is, 'Who's next?' Will you be satisfied with closing down the newspaper? Or will you then find it's the Co-op Bookstore that scares you? Or the Film Society? What about the Ski Club? They ski Red Mountain, you know . . . Well, let me just warn you, Mr. Chairman. When you come to close down the Hebridean Society, watch out. You're likely to get a curling stone in the head!"

Barry sits down, ignoring the laughter and applause of the gallery, and sees Gloria frowning at him, as she did after he tried to silence Waters' motion. Perhaps that last remark did weaken his case, but surely she can't want him to let the newspaper be closed down without at least having his say. He wishes he could understand Gloria's silent gestures. The more familiar he is with them, the more mysterious and contradictory they become.

At the council table, Andrea has raised the question of whether the Arrow is actually responsible to Council for its editorial policy. But since the majority is ready to vote, the dispute is academic. Without resolving the matter, and over Andrea's objections, Minor calls for a show of hands, declares the motion passed with a rap of his gavel, and in short order adjourns the meeting, leaving the gallery to react noisily but too late.

"What happened? What happened?" Smoky yells at Barry.

"Ask him." Barry points at Minor, who is slipping out a side door of the gym, flashing him the finger as he leaves. "He said there'd be an official letter in the morning. We're fired."

The gathering disperses reluctantly into the Student Centre lobby, in a state of unrelieved tension. Amid the angry post-mortems, Barry notices Gloria lingering in the gym to talk to Andrea. Sid and Zak are conferring at the bottom of the staircase, Smoky hanging around them, scanning the faces in the crowd, suddenly acting quite detached from the emotion of the situation.

"That's it," says Sid matter-of-factly, re-lighting his cigar as Barry joins them. He seems pleased with the evening's developments. "You're with us, aren't you Barry?"

"Of course. What is this, a mass resignation?"

Though Zak looks dismayed at the suggestion, Sid laughs his goatish laugh. "Resignation? Wouldn't Minor love us for that." Sid explains that when Minor stopped the presses and seized the printer's plates, he forgot to take the layout sheets. "The presses can be rolling again by morning."

Barry smiles but feels cheated. Sid knew this all along, and he sat back laughing while the others yelled themselves hoarse. "But they've taken away our budget. How do you expect to put out a paper with no money?"

"I've got a little bread," Sid says, taking out his battered wallet. "Think anybody here would help us?"

With a laugh, Barry picks up a styrofoam cup from the table beside the stairs, shakes out a few drops of creamed coffee from the bottom, and calls out to the people milling in the lobby. "Free the Arrow! Read what Council banned. Subscribe to the Free Arrow Fund."

Sid is ready with a crisp new twenty-dollar bill, Zak finds a five, and as Barry circulates through the lobby, his cup is soon overflowing with contributions.

Waiting while the Dean of Woman searches her purse for her wallet, which is buried beneath her pocket edition of Mill, Barry hears Sid tell Smoky on their way upstairs, "Bow College is a political playpen. Next issue will make this one look like the Booster Club newsletter."

Barry is joking with a pair of girls as they timidly open their wallets, when he sees Andrea and her entourage come down the stairs with their coats on and march straight toward the door. He hurries after them, shaking his cup full of money, calling "Support the Arrow. Read what Council banned." But with a supercilious look Andrea strides past him.

Gloria remains behind in the lobby, but she is preoccupied, and hardly looks at him as he dances around her shaking the cup. "I suppose you're proud of yourself," she says. She must have been listening to the others criticize him.

"Proud? I'm not proud. Not at all, I'll take quarters, dimes, nickels."

She smiles reluctantly, but keeps a cool distance. "You know what I mean. That performance you put on in there."

Now that the euphoria of the evening has past, Barry is afraid to look back at what he has done. Yes, it was a performance. For every person shouting with him, there must have been two others laughing at him. After the meeting too, hopping around like a hurdy-gurdy man's monkey with his cup . . . For what?

"I guess you're right," he says. Yet as he speaks he is feeling the money in the cup, thinking it wasn't for nothing. At least he raised enough to start on a new issue. "We were stupid to shoot off our mouths like that."

He expects Gloria to reassure him that he isn't stupid, but she answers, "That's what the Arrow has always done, Barry. You make a big noise, but what can you do? It's just one hopeless cause after another."

"We. You mean what can we do? You're part of the Arrow too, you know. If you think there's something wrong with it, speak up."

"That's not true and you know it. I'm not part of the Arrow like you are, Barry." He does know it. Sid wouldn't listen to her. He hardly listens to anyone any more, except his own echo in Smoky. Gloria sits at the bottom of the staircase, looking defeated. She blinks rapidly as she speaks, and her fists clench. "Sid only tolerates me because I'm a woman and therefore unimportant. I just can't--" Her breathing is forced. "I can't work for Sid anymore. You know what he says women are good for."

Barry sits beside her on the steps, wishing he knew what to do to calm her. "But he doesn't mean that crap!"

"Yes he does!" He puts his hands on her shoulders and she shrinks away from him. "How would you feel if he told you every day you're not good enough to write for his stinking paper? How do you think it feels being--"

Suddenly, she shakes free from him and runs to the door. Though his coat is upstairs, Barry follows her down the steps to the sidewalk, still holding the cup of money.

When he catches up to her and takes hold of her elbow, she turns and hugs him close to her, her shoulders quivering. "Let's not fight over Sid," he tells her, "he's not worth it. Quit the paper if you want, only don't let it come between us."

"It's not only that." Gloria's words are muffled. She sniffs and looks up at him, her eyes wet. "I thought you might . . . It looks like you'll be doing more than ever on the paper now." While she wouldn't ask him straight out to quit with her, her eyes plead.

"I won't work anymore tonight," he promises. He kisses her cheek and her tears sting his chapped lips. It is a taste he doesn't want to become familiar with.

He kisses her other cheek, and she laughs. "Comrade," she whispers, hugging him again. Shaking with laughter, with tears on her face.

"Come on," she says, "you must be freezing. Let's get inside."

Barry runs up to get his coat from the office while Gloria, who won't face the staff now, waits in the lobby. He is almost afraid to leave her. Her moods are so confusing that she might be crying or mad at him again by the time he gets back.

When he strolls into the office counting the money he has collected, he finds Smoky at his table, typing from notes. The office is more full of busy people now than Barry has ever seen it. Students who long ago stopped coming in to work because they said Sid turned them off have rallied to the Arrow's support tonight. Now that the paper is threatened, there is a sense of genuine excitement.

Sid himself is bent over the light table, tearing up one of the layout pages with a razor blade. "Where the hell you been?" he snarls at Barry, taking the cup without looking at it. "We've got work to do. We're re-doing this whole damn issue. Shorten it, cut the crap, make it solid. Here. You can get busy on page four and five. Take this shit out and--"

"But Sid, I--"

"None of your but's for Chrissake. We gotta get this mother on the stands before term break. What the hell you waiting for?" Not until he has shown Barry exactly how he wants the pages to look does Sid pick up the money and, counting it hurriedly, walk back to his cubicle.

A few minutes later, Barry slips away from the light table to tell Gloria he will be late getting home. The lobby is deserted, except for a janitor slowly pushing a broom across the floor. Barry asks him if he has seen anyone waiting, but the man shakes his head without looking up, and goes on whistling to himself and pushing his broom through the day's debris.

411 Bay
Ottawa
December 9

Barry,

No, your eyes are not deceiving you. My new address is Ottawa. I got sick of the struggle for existence in Toronto, and on a tip that Ottawa is the biggest boom town this side of Calgary, I hitchhiked up here to case it out, arriving after a long windy day on the road, in the middle of a celebration that made the Calgary Stampede look like Sunday morning traffic. Cars were crawling up and down Bank Street, horns blaring; people sitting on the hoods and roofs drinking beer, walking all over the street whooping and hugging each other and dowsing each other with booze. Grey Cup victory celebration: I didn't even know the game was being played.

It was quite a welcome, and a good omen for me. Next day--Monday--I went out and landed a job (of sorts) before lunchtime. I spent only three nights at the Y, then moved into this apartment which I'm sharing with a quiet guy who is a postal clerk at the Department of Agriculture and a good cook to boot.

No millionaires work on Ottawa's Bay Street. There are no bank towers and no board rooms. It's an unassuming one-way street that descends Parliament Hill gradually from the National Archives (where I do some of my work) down a mile-long arcade of maple trees past subdivided brick houses all the size of the Co-op, ending in a few grotty apartment rows (where I live) and the bus depot beneath the Queensway, handy for quick getaways. An ordinary street: there's the devilish genius of my plot. Who would think of looking here for the mastermind who is going to drown the Parliament Buildings in a sea of computer printout paper? (Delusions of grandeur living so near to the seat of power.)

I'm working for the government, of course (Ottawa must be the country's biggest company town). For one of those obscure little bureaus that report to the Secretary of State. It's called the Office for Practical Studies, and is located over a laundry in an obscure little building east of Parliament Hill, in Ottawa's one and only lower-class neighborhood.

I bet you're saying to yourself, "That bastard; how can he go over to the other side?" Don't sweat it, though; I didn't even have to be a nationalist to get the job. Fact is, there are basically only two employers in this country: government and money. And since the government prints the money it's all the same, but I'd rather say I work for the people than for the profit of so-and-so. Unfortunately, since I'm at the stage of primitive accumulation, I have no other options.

My job? Well, um, it's a little hard to describe. I'm not sure what I'm supposed to be doing, yet, myself. But call me a researcher. I'm on a term contract, which means the job ends April 1 whether anyone has filled it the whole time or not. My supervisor, Dr. Yew, hates to see money go unspent, so he hired me on the spot as soon as he found out I can write my name. This first week or so I've been told just to read and get ideas for a "self-directed research project". In other words, they got this grant money to hire somebody, but don't really know what to do with me.

The Office for Practical Studies, I've read, is "an independent regulatory body responsible for reviewing research in the social sciences by government departments and agencies and recipients of government grants, to insure that research is in line with international standards and of practical use to Canadians". Which is to say, I'm doing a sort of intellectual audit. I'm the government axe-man, the unfeeling civil servant with the power to make recommendations as to the renewal of contracts, budgets etc. (Whether my recommendations are ever read or acted on, of course, is another matter.) It seems the policy is to bring in legions of students and unemployables and expose them to official secrets, then have them make analyses for the experts who are too busy amassing data to pause for an overview. I'm sure they've got information on everything imaginable here. I can't believe the amount of paper. There's probably even a file on you here somewhere, Barry, though chances are, no one could find it.

I had to swear "so help me God" not to divulge any official secrets. So far, though, everything I've read has been published material. Why, I've read hundreds of publications you hick taxpayers have never heard of. The Journal of Social Dynamics, for instance, and Publications of the International Society of Demographers and Political Geographers, Population Studies, etc. etc. Not to mention Time, The New York Times, The Sunday Times, Saturday Night, Saturday Review, The Montreal Star, The Washington Star, The Red Star, The Vancouver Sun, The London Mercury, World, even the sex mag. Venus (to study new social trends, of course). I get to work at a handy-dandy computer that scans thousands of articles for key words and lists them for me in seconds. So far, I've read, classified and filed stories about the psychology of inflation and the psychology of rape; rural crime vs. urban crime; political linguistics in Africa, ESP in the Urals, flying saucers in Manitoba, anti-social behavior of crayfish in contaminated waters, and of rats in overcrowded 'ghetto labs'; about religious conversion, the psychology of hostage-taking, nationalist movements, terrorist movements, and the taxonomy of criminal pathologies; about language learning in dolphins and chimps, the language and memory of bees, and the feasibility of brain transplants in bees, ants, and by implication, Canadians.

In the meantime, I'm keeping my eyes open for a job more conducive to sanity (presuming I don't die of information-overload before I find it), hopefully one that will allow me to take photographs.

Obviously, I don't have a proper attitude for this job. But as yet, the labor code doesn't permit discrimination on the basis of attitude. Officially, the government doesn't even know how many separatists it employs, though it wouldn't be averse to a study on the matter. I observed a variant of one of your party games at a bar Friday night: the more-separatist-than-thou game. It's a favorite, it seems, among francophone civil servants, who naturally don't have to justify aiding and abetting the federal government: how many civil servants do that? I, for one, have rendered my country no service yet, though I am contributing to the national debt by drawing my salary, such as it is. Why didn't we see it before? The way to subvert the government is to join the civil service! If we all did that, the country would be brought to its knees in no time.

Well, it's midnight and I'm a working man. I'll sign off on that note, and leave you to concoct your own plots for revolution.

Keep writing,

Tom

December 15

I've been sitting outside my second final exam of the day, Tom, re-reading your letter and wondering what I can say to you. It's not that I'd rather see you stay in the wilderness of unemployment, but why are you so tickled to have a job you don't believe in or care about? Go on through to the other side if you choose, but do it with conviction, or you'll make yourself miserable.

It's sickening, in this free society, how hard we all work to repress ourselves. We look around us and see things that need doing, yet we don't do them. We sit on our hands until somebody hires us, and naturally, he doesn't care what we think needs doing. You said earlier that we need an unemployeds union, Tom. Well now you'll be able to 'study the problem' instead.

Be careful though, or you might end up like this Pavlovian elite who just filed in for their History Three Nine One exam. When you tell them their degree, when they get it, will be nothing but a membership card in the Establishment, they start to salivate. Yes, they sweat and chew their nails while crowding around the entrance door. But they love it. The test is a frightful, unfair and glorious opportunity for them to earn their pedigree. They snatch my information sheet about the Profits of War, and scribble study notes on the back!

I haven't been totally deserted in this strike--there are always a few willing picketers--but once the exam is under way they leave me to my vigil and get back to the library to cram. Except for a few people sitting out tests they have no chance of passing, nobody else is striking their own exams; that's a fool's game. And I guess I'm the fool.

That's what Gloria keeps telling me. She seems to think I'm acting this way just to embarass her. Actually, I'd like to oblige her and avoid the ridicule, but it would mean having to take back everything I've said. By now, I am persisting out of sheer stubbornness. And I have plenty of that. I sit outside the gymnasium the full three hours of each exam, handing out scratch paper for study notes. Usually, students are readier to talk to me _after_ the test, especially the early finishers, who feel rebellious after having flunked and want to let off steam. 'But don't get _serious_ man. What's the matter with you?'

It seems even I am not allowed to be serious. The professors are conspiring to save me from myself. When I announced the strike, Humboldt cancelled the final exam in his course and assigned an extra paper instead, which I wrote to prove I'm no trifler. This morning, while I was sitting outside Phil. 290, Professor Walker left the hall and sat with me. He questioned me point by point on my information sheet--saying things like, 'That's a defence of your cause, son, what of your action?'--until I realized what he was doing. Walker, the pickwickian pederast of the Philosophy Department, is so kindly he hates to flunk anybody. He called my defence an oral exam and said it deserved a B.

Me: But you can't do that! It would invalidate my strike if I didn't give up anything.

He: Quite so. But if, as you maintain, you don't value this thing you refuse--this degree--then it is no sacrifice for you to give it up. But I believe you do value it, Barry.

How do you talk back to a philosopher?

So it looks as if I can't even strike properly. For all the good it has done, I may as well have immolated myself. Then, at least, the story would have been picked up by CP. As it is, I'll be lucky to get an inch-long filler in Insurgence.

Yes, Insurgence is back. Student Council finally pulled the plug on the Arrow, as they've been threatening to do for months--cancelled last week's issue when the presses were already rolling--and within twenty-four hours we'd graduated from putting out an independent Arrow to a full-fledged revival of Insurgence, hopefully with a readership this time. We'll pick up some wireservice stories, but mainly we'll rely on our own ability to chase down stories and make new contacts across the country. We're actually reaching the stage of tactics, something I'd begun to think would never happen here.

So the suppression of the Arrow isn't necessarily bad news. It has given us a charge of energy just when we needed it. The new paper may even generate enough excitement to show Calgary isn't the backwater Sid has always said it is.

But at what cost? I've told you what Gloria thinks of the strike. Now that Insurgence is gathering momentum, she acts as if my working on it is one long, equally fruitless strike. On the weekend, the two of us drove to the mountains with Zak and Margot and Amy, to swim at the hot springs and tramp around the woods one last time before the snow gets too deep. It was a very quiet, friendly day: plenty of laughs, plenty of being alone together. The silence of the mountainsides cleared my head in all directions. But Gloria couldn't simply be grateful for it. She kept commenting on how peaceful it was, how we ought to get away by ourselves more often, and not chase around so hectically when we are in the city. In other words, avoid certain hectic people, don't get involved in so many causes, leave Insurgence to Sid and his fellow armchair militants.

You may ask how I understand all this from a few off-hand remarks (they were not much more than that). I'm not sure how I do--by the angle of her head when she looked at me, perhaps, or the way she listened--but I know what has been on her mind. And it makes things more difficult than ever. I mean, I can't back out on the newspaper now; not now that it's worth committing myself to. At the same time, though, I've never been this close to anyone before, and I'm afraid if I don't listen to Gloria's subtle messages, then I'll be losing out on something, some understanding, which I can't do without. I used to think I didn't have it in me to love. Don't expect too much, I told myself, and you won't be disappointed. I think I purposely sabotaged myself with one or two girls, to prove to myself I didn't need them. I am learning from Gloria how wrong-headed that way of thinking is. Ask for everything, I should say, and give everything. But how can I change myself now?

But that is not a question your computer can classify, Tom. It would be happier if I stuck to revolutionary plots. Then it would know where to file me.

I trust you will leak anything you consider leakable, Tom, whether it's an official secret or not. Come to think of it, you're in an excellent position to spy on the government for us. Figure out that computer you think is such a nifty toy, and who knows what you might plug into . . . That would be an answer to those hypocrites who talk so lightly on a heavy subject. Armed struggle is inevitable, they say, but they don't start it, of course, because the outcome is obvious. If you're out to slay a giant, Jack, be crafty. Don't tackle him head on; attack where he's weakest. And if the giant is the twentieth century, use his addiction to information against him. Information is his lifeblood, Tom. Leak it, spill it, do anything, but get it to the people who can use it.

Well, white-faced students are leaking out of the examination hall already. I'd better 'sign off' and see how many strikers I can recruit.

Keep your eyes open,

Barry

Date: 16.12.69

From: Dormouse

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Herewith, summary of Postal Survey on the subject, 1.12.69 - 15.12.69, and three enclosures. Permission requested to continue Postal Survey.

2. Also enclosed, a photo of subject (circled red) with members of both the 'Mall' and 'Park' groups, taken during Moratorium demonstration in Calgary, 13.12.69.

3. Electronic Survey I has been installed on the subject's home telephone. However, due to the high number of routine calls made and received by at least twenty-four parties besides the subject, full transcription will be delayed.

4. After listening to sixteen hours of tapes, Dormouse AC3 booked off on annual leave, indicating she thought it 'ridiculous at her salary to waste her time in such a way'.

5. AC4 is more pliable, but cannot be induced to listen to tapes at double speed.

6. Of particular significance during this reporting period is the subject's dismissal, along with the entire staff, from the Bow College student newspaper, and the staff's subsequent resolve to publish an independent radical journal, reviving the name Insurgence.

7. Full intelligence on these developments is owing to the work of Dormouse AC7, who has secured a position of trust on the journal's staff. Recommend Incentive Bonus I.

8. In the judgment of this office, the re-emergence of Insurgence presages the hardening of ideological lines and escalation of dissent forecast in the study, Canada's Security Needs for the Seventies (Washington, 1969).

9. While the subject does not, in the enclosed letter, detail the "tactics" he and his confederates are considering, the suggestion that his correspondent engage in computer crime demonstrates that he regards the law as no obstacle to the pursuit of his ends.

10. In the current atmosphere of unrest, it is imperative not to under-estimate the risk the subject represents. Alberta's recent rapid industrial growth, bringing with it a major population shift from the countryside to the cities and an accompanying decay of ancient values, has introduced new and uncontrollable social factors. As German studies have shown, increasing material prosperity, without strong moral or religious underpinnings, may itself become a focus for discontent among the disaffected.

11. As the aforementioned handbook points out (ref. para. 8 above), Alberta, with its wells, refineries, pipelines and head offices, is especially vulnerable to violent attacks against the status quo.

12. Dormouse AC7 reports that this fact (ref. para.11 above) has not been overlooked in the subject's discussions of "tactics", though the Insurgence staff is equivocal about the use of revolutionary violence.

4 enclosures

Date: 17.12.69

From: Elephant

To: Dormouse

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Report on subject dated 16.12.69 most unsatisfactory; viz.

2. Summary of Postal Survey, and third enclosure (ref. 16.12.69 para.1) are not included: inexcusable carelessness.

3. Employment of Dormouse AC7 prior to completion of security clearance (ref. 16.12.69 para. 7) is a potentially dangerous breach of security. Dormouse AC7 is to be suspended from all active assignments until clearance has been granted.

4. Dormouse AC1 is not to indulge in speculation on anti-subversion theory (ref. 16.12.69 para. 9, 10). Dormouse AC1 should give proper care and attention to matters within his own parameters before expecting to influence higher-level discussions.

5. The subject's letter of 15.12.69 confirms independent reports of an escalation of subversive activity in the region. Submit, within seven days, a shortlist of proposals designed to de-fuse this threat.

Date: 18.12.69

From: Dormouse AC5

To: Elephant

Subject: Dormouse AC1

1. I understand that personal communication of this kind is irregular. However, I am unable to channel this report through my supervisor, since he is himself the subject of present concern.

2. Enclosed are notes recording only the most serious misjudgments and improprieties in AC1's recent performance of his duties. I hope you agree that it would be irresponsible of me not to bring them to Elephant's attention.

3. To summarize, in the past two months AC1 has,

i) contributed in innumerable ways to general office mismanagement and inefficiency;

ii) issued contradictory directives, at times within hours of one another;

iii) attempted to promulgate suspicion and distrust between his subordinates;

iv) opened confidential correspondence addressed to his subordinates;

v) misinterpreted and directly contravened Elephant directives;

vi) attempted to instil contempt for Elephant in his subordinates;

vii) neglected several key files to a dangerous degree;

viii) prosecuted certain files beyond justifiable limits.

4. In fairness to AC1, Elephant should know that the subject's

behavior has been influenced by the following personal factors:

i) since before his divorce last year, AC1's dependence on Dormouse AC2 had been more than professional; justly or unjustly, he interpreted her transfer to Elephant a personal betrayal on the part of AC2;

ii) though strictly controlled during working hours, AC1's drinking--to judge by one chance encounter and his frequent rationalization--has become a problem once again;

iii) AC1 repeatedly blames himself for the fate of his only daughter who recently (in his own words) "ran off to Vancouver with one of those goddam hippie radicals", a fact which impairs his judgment of all students under surveillance.

5. While the aforesaid in no way mitigates the subject's erratic behavior, or relieves him of professional responsibility, it should be considered in determining a further course of action. In this light, I recommend that an extended leave of absence, or a transfer to a less sensitive posting, be considered.

6. Considering the possible consequence of continued misjudgment and mismanagement, I recommend all due haste in this regard. I am thoroughly briefed in the operations of this office, and would be prepared, if requested, to replace AC1 at short notice.

## THE DOOR IS OPEN

Grey light rests upon a glass of water on the dresser, upon a grey ring of scum around the surface of the water, and the reversed images of the books behind it. The spiny green stem of a rose sticks out of the glass. The red flower leans against its reflection in the mirror, darkening to blues and violets in the decaying light.

Early darkness is falling. Barry nestles beside Gloria, whose breathing is deep and even. Sleeping? Where he lies, he can't see her face. He looks at their two motionless bodies in the mirror, his square and hairy, hers slender and pale. Her brown hair looks very dark against her white, lustrous skin. Deep beneath their bed, the furnace whirs and creaks into action, intruding into his reverie. He pulls the blanket over them and luxuriates in her warmth, while at their heads a slow inexorable cold creeps through the wall.

His arm growing stiff, crooked under her head, he shifts onto his side. Her eyes open slowly. The lines of her face have softened from sleep. Looking into her eyes, he seems able to see right down into her, to see her as a child and a woman at once. She traces circles on his shoulder with her fingertips. He presses closer to her, kissing her neck.

"Will you visit me when I'm in the country?" she whispers. He moves his hands slowly over her smooth warm skin. He doesn't want to think of her leaving yet. They have all evening and all night. She places her hand against his. Their fingers interlock. "It's beautiful there . . . We might be snowed in--"

He kisses her neck, ear, cheek, mouth, feeling no urgency, only pleasure. "Or we could pretend we're snowed in here." She stretches contentedly beneath his caresses.

A door slams somewhere in the house, and they hear heavy footsteps on the stairs. Barry continues to explore her body, licking sweat from between her breasts. But awareness of other people has made her tense.

"MacDonald, are you up there? We need you." It is Sid's grating voice from the stairwell.

Barry touches Gloria's lips with his fingers, stroking gently, but she is as tight as a spring.

The pounding footsteps come closer. "Get down here, Barry, or do I come in after you?"

Barry rolls onto his back, swearing to himself. "What's wrong now?"

"Get your ass in gear, MacDonald. This is important."

Barry kisses Gloria again, but she turns her back to him, lying with the blanket pulled over her ears. Only now does he suspect that her dislike of Sid is mingled with fear. She is afraid he will come in after them.

"Just a minute," Barry calls, and rolls out of bed. Gloria watches him, her face blank. He has no desire to leave her, but knows Sid will give them no peace. "I won't be long," he promises as he dresses. Sitting on the bed beside her, he is once more drawn into her fragrant aura.

But Sid hollers again, "Barry!"

Barry follows the sound of voices downstairs and into the kitchen. There Margot, pulling one of Zak's lumpy sweaters around her, stands at the top of the basement stairs and shouts down. "You can't do this, I won't let you." Despite the cold, the back door is wide open, Zak's van in the lane beside it. White clouds of cold air billow in along the floor. A dirty wet track leads to the open basement door.

"Coming through," shouts Sid, struggling through the back door under the weight of a liquor case filled to overflowing with file folders and loose paper.

"Barry!" Margot cries as Sid lumbers down the stairs. "You stop them Barry. Tell them they can't just walk in here and take over, I don't care who they are." Her kinky hair pushed in all directions, a cigarette dangling from her mouth, she looks and talks like a wild woman.

"Whoa, slow down, who's taking over?" Barry sees Zak climbing the stairs toward them. "What's going on here?"

"Ask them!" Margot shrieks. "They come barging in here, no word to anybody--"

"The van's full of boxes, Barry," Zak says. "Let's get with it."

"Hold it. What's going on?"

"What do you think?" Zak continues toward the brightly colored van without a pause. "Minor finally got wise we weren't moving out of the office. So he busted in with half the goddam football team and trashed the place."

"MacDonald!" Sid yells, coming up the stairs. "Get busy you lazy bastard. There's twenty more boxes out there."

"You tell him, Barry," Margot demands, waving her cigarette in front of her. "He has no right to just waltz in here."

"Can't leave the fucking files in the street, you dizzy bitch!"

"Calm down!" Barry steps between them. Though he is a self-appointed peacemaker, he hates the role.

"Gangway!" Zak comes through with two liquor crates stacked to his chin.

"Now, what's this got to do with the Co-op?"

Sid throws up his hands in frustration. "For fuck sake, Barry! The newspaper! We're evicted! We need a new office! We can't let the bastards shut us down. There's no room at my place, so--"

"So you come here!" Margot shouts, slamming the back door. "Well, you can stay on the street for all I care." Her yelling has brought spectators from all over the house. Frances holds back Amy, who is frightened. Forrest, stoned as usual, laughs and claps his hands, which makes Margot even more furious.

Zak appears, remounting the basement stairs. "There's room down there," he says. "That old coal bin's full of junk. We can clean it up."

"If the Co-op agrees," Barry adds.

Zak nods, stroking his gold earring, and heads for the back door.

"Oh no you don't!" Margot lunges to the door, trying to keep Zak from opening it. He pushes her aside and reaches for the door handle. "You promised!" she screams.

The next second several things happen at once. Zak lets out a roar, turns around raising his hand to his face, slips on the wet floor and falls with a crash, his head striking the door so hard the windows shake. Margot is immediately on her knees, holding his hand against her chest. She throws her cigarette onto the floor, and Barry sees that it has been crushed. She has stubbed it on the back of Zak's hand, and is remorsefully trying to nurse him.

"Oh, it's deep," she cries. She opens the door and is about to put snow on the burn, but Barry tells her to use the salve in the medicine chest upstairs.

"I'm all right," Zak groans through gritted teeth. He is obviously more embarrassed than hurt, but where he is holding the injured hand his nails dig into the skin. He allows Margot to lead him up the back stairway, while Sid returns to the van for another box.

Barry follows him outside, shivering. "The Co-op will have to vote before you set up any office down there."

"Sure, sure. But we can't leave these boxes in the truck. They weigh a ton."

They stack the liquor cases--story files, back issues, photos, magazines, office supplies, work-in-progress; the entire bodily remains of the _Arrow_ and _Insurgence_--in a dark corner of the basement, which was once the coal bin. Now it is cluttered with cartons of empty bottles, old newspapers, cans of dried-up paint, ladders, sawhorses, bed springs, bald summer tires, shovels, rakes, scrap lumber and a rusty push-mower.

"The _Times_ newsroom it's not," Sid says, surveying the space. "But if we clean up this shit, run in some more lights, and throw some of that plywood over those sawhorses, we might just make a go of it."

"Might," Barry agrees. "But what if the Co-op throws us out?"

Sid pulls a new cigar from his coat pocket and spits the end onto the floor. "Let them try." He strikes a match on the concrete foundation. With the cigar smoking in his mouth, he begins to push the bottles and paint cans out of the way, behind the furnace.

Within a few minutes, the two of them have cleared a space and set a large sheet of plywood across the sawhorses. Without pausing, Sid opens one of the boxes and begins sorting paper. "We'll have Insurgence out on the stands with two good days' work," he says. "But first we have to find the stuff in this mess."

"Where's everybody else?"

"Smoky said he'd be here by now. I don't know where the hell he had to go. I left a note on the door for the others. It'd be just like Minor to take it down." Finding nothing but back issues in the first box, Sid swears and pushes it aside. "What happened to Zak?"

Barry shrugs. "I guess he and Margot are making it up."

"Jesus, you bastards! You're all cunt-struck. How do you expect to make a revolution in bed?"

Barry shakes his head, thinking of Gloria waiting for him. "You want a loveless revolution, Sid?"

"Goddam it, I want a revolution!" Sid heaves a second box onto the table and shifts it toward one of the sawhorses just in time to prevent a spill.

Barry can't understand how anyone can hate injustice without loving humanity. But he wouldn't tell Sid as much. It sounds too corny, put that way: humanity. It is hard enough loving one woman.

Footsteps sound on the stairs above them. Between the steps Barry sees a pair of bell-bottom blue jeans. "Barry, are you down there?" Andrea's clipped, business-like voice.

"We're just cleaning up a bit," he tells her.

"Well then, clean up in the kitchen where it counts. I have to cook supper, and the floor's covered with mud."

"Sure, go ahead," Sid says as Barry fills a bucket with soapy water. "Do the women's work. That suits you."

Andrea is standing at the sink peeling potatoes when Barry arrives upstairs, and Gloria is sitting at the kitchen table, examining the ends of her hair nervously. They have evidently agreed what they must tell him, and begin as soon as he has closed the basement door.

"Barry, you've got to talk to Sid," Gloria says, refusing to meet his gaze.

Andrea adds, "We just can't have that newspaper office downstairs. It's impossible."

Barry slops water onto the floor and pushes it around with the mop, nodding and saying 'yes' when required, but not committing himself to do anything. Andrea claims that the coalbin--which no one has wanted to use until now--is a common area. A vote must be taken on its use. She doesn't want outsiders coming and going at all hours. "Sid isn't even a member of the Co-op."

"No problem," Barry answers. "As of today Sid's not the editor. I am." He has just thought of this, but the idea pleases him. He has always wanted an underground paper.

Gloria frowns at him. Her eyes no longer have the depth he saw in them this afternoon. It is as if she has drawn a curtain between herself and him. "It won't be permanent," he adds. "Give it a month, and then if it doesn't work out--"

"It won't work out," Gloria cries. "We all know it won't." She slaps the table, making a knife on the butter dish jump and clatter.

"I won't live under the same roof as that paper!"

Andrea calls it a male chauvinist rag that cheapens words like liberation, but Barry doesn't respond. He is startled by Gloria's sudden anger. Though she regains her usual reserve, Barry can tell she is as emotional over this as Margot. He thrusts his mop into the bucket, and when water splashes onto the floor, he kicks the bucket and spills some more.

"I can't believe what I'm hearing," he says. "Why did we start this co-op in the first place? Was it just to save on rent? I thought we had some ideas about living and working together . . . Well, here's a chance to make it a working co-op, and all you can say . . ." Neither answers or looks at him. Gloria keeps her eyes on the table, digging at it with the knife, while Andrea slices carrots into the pot. "What about you?" Barry demands of Andrea. "You don't ask me if I approve of every guy you bring home do you?"

"It's not the same." Andrea points her paring knife at him menacingly. "Sid doesn't give a shit about your ideals, Barry, or the Co-op either, unless it serves his purpose. If you can't see that--"

"Barry!" Gloria stands, her face white and strained. "Let's talk about this alone. You just get your back up when you're outnumbered."

"Can you blame me? You both have knives!"

Gloria takes his hand firmly and pulls him toward the common room. He can't understand why her objection is so strong, but lets himself be led.

In the middle of the common room floor sit Nance and Nanda, apparently in deep meditation. A vision of Nanda's has told them to stay and open their mission in Calgary instead of moving on to Regina. But it hasn't provided them with money to rent a place of their own. As Gloria hurries into the room Nance opens his eyes and waves them away, his lips forming the words, 'Get out, get out'.

"They're gathering like vultures!" Gloria cries. She starts toward the stairs but, changing her mind, leads Barry through the kitchen again, and out the back door to the garage. A single weak light bulb mitigates the darkness in this small unheated structure. Old furniture is piled up and pushed into the shadowy corners, leaving only a narrow walking space.

"You can't let this happen, Barry, you can't." Gloria's voice is hoarse with strain and determination. But when she turns toward him the set lines of her face collapse, and she throws her arms around him. Her violent sobbing catches him off guard and confused. "It was all right as long as we had the Co-op to get away to," she says, her voice muffled against his shirt. "You could be yourself then. I thought I could have part of you, but-- But I can't live with your politics night and day!"

Barry protests that it wouldn't be that way, that having Insurgence in the house would make it more involved in living, not a thing set apart. The paper's attacks on vague targets like capitalism have done nothing but make enemies. But maybe now--

Gloria breaks away from him and walks to the cluttered end of the garage. When she turns back to him, her face remains in shadow. "But Barry, I'm only human. I want to laugh and sing sometimes like we used to. I want to do wild reckless things without worrying about whether they're reactionary. I want to be able to relax in my own house without having Sid put the make on me whenever your back is turned."

Barry can't believe his ears at first, but it takes little protestation from Gloria to convince him that what she says about Sid is true. Barry has seen, himself, that Sid's real or feigned contempt for a woman never prevents him from trying to get what he can from her. One of last year's office occupations was broken up when Andrea screamed at Sid to leave her alone, then ran out leaving the door open.

"He can't understand why any woman would work for his fucking paper unless she wants to sleep with him," Gloria says. "That's the real reason I quit, and I won't stand for it any more."

"Well, I'll talk to him--"

"What good would that do? Tell him to get the fuck out. That's all you should talk to him about." Having finally come out with what she had to say, Gloria stands with her arms crossed, staring at Barry, demanding his agreement.

But what she has told him doesn't seem worthy of such excitement. He has no reason to be jealous, obviously, and doesn't blame Sid for being attracted to her. She can't expect Barry to run to her defence as if she were this minute being attacked.

"Im getting cold," he says at last, opening the door of the garage. A light snow has begun to fall. "I'll talk to Sid, and start looking for a new office in the morning."

As Barry enters the house, the back door hits the bucket--still sitting where he left it--and water splashes onto his feet. Andrea, standing at the steaming oven, says, "You didn't expect me to pick up after you, did you?"

He mops the floor one last time while Gloria, without looking at him, helps Andrea set the table, then he carries the bucket downstairs to dump the dirty water. In the coal bin, Zak is hanging up a trouble light to augment the one bare bulb over the table. His burned hand is wrapped in cotton, and he uses it as little as possible.

Sid is still working quickly, opening boxes and sorting the papers into piles. "What a fucking mess!" he says. "Minor must have told those jocks to mix everything up to make it harder for us." He looks up at Barry and says sharply. "What's bugging you? Get busy sorting files."

"I'll get busy," Barry tells him, "finding someplace for a permanent office."

"What the hell for? This'll be O.K. The Co-op said we could stay. Right Zak?"

Zak shrugs, rubbing the wrist of his bandaged hand. "I talked to the ones who are here. Most all of them are fucking off for the term-break anyway. It's O.K. by them if we're here while they're gone. That gives us two weeks anyway."

"Two weeks," Barry says. "It might take us that long to find a new place."

"For fuck sake, will you bastards shut up and get to work? While you're standing there jawing I'm doing this whole damn issue myself." Sid slaps his shirt pockets, then helps himself to one of Zak's cigarettes which are lying on the table. "I dunno," he says thoughtfully, lighting up. "Sometimes I wonder if I'm wasting myself on this one-horse town." Zak and Barry exchange amused looks. "I really wonder."

# COMING OF AGE

Day and night, now that Gloria is in the country, Barry practices to deceive time. At night, when the Fahrenheit is dropping out of sight, he awakes looking at a giant sun rising over a red and gold sea, the white word JAMAICA barely visible among the waves. He plays a tape he recorded of the tide at Galway on a clear windy day two years ago. Sitting in a hot bath with the newspaper, he reads that it is ninety-one degrees in Kingston. Only seventy-nine in Saigon, but infinitely hotter there, under the Yankees' display of superior fire-power. Barry soaks, thinking of phoning Gloria--who would answer?--and stares at a print of a Van Gogh night scene in southern France. Stars hang in the warm sky of the picture like rare delicate fruit.

Later, Barry is given the cold shoulder by the frosted window of a trolley bus. He shares the seat with a broad commissionaire, then a shiftworker. The flickering and dimming white lights of the bus temporarily ward off night for Barry and the cleaning ladies, hardhats and packs of teenagers who ride with him past the Wales, Empress, York, Colonial and Queens, along the C.P.R. tracks, then the long ride to the east end of Ninth Avenue, where Barry is the last to step down from the bus in a neighborhood of abattoirs, breweries, freightyards and oil refineries, where the acid wind smells of oily blood and used beer.

Here the stars have contracted to sharp points of ice. On a street of clapboard houses, their windows covered with polythene or cardboard or frost, the air itself crystallizes around him and falls as snow. Then, making day of night, carrying a bag lunch to be eaten six hours before dawn, he goes to work in a low brick warehouse, tossing parcels into sacks.

Acme, Alliance, Alder Flats. Beaverlodge, Blacktail, Breton, Bearberry, Bon Accord. The work is easy, and though time drags it is only time measured on the clock. The coffee breaks are regular and the lunch break is leisurely, so the shift is accomplished in easy stages. When a mail sack is full he ties it shut and loads it onto a wagon to be taken to the trucks. Cochrane, Canmore, Carbon, Coaldale, Cereal, Chin, Chinook. He tosses parcels from one end of the province to the other in a grand denial of space, remembering Canmore when the chinook blew, and the time he and a friend explored an old coal mine there, and he cut his chin.

It is mindless work. His toughest decisions are what to discard during the lunchtime crib game. One week a year is all the reminder he wants of the drudgery he intends to escape. But even here, he is glad to find, men do take pride in their work. "D-don't s-send out a bag like that, half-empty," says the permanent, working beside him. "Stuff-stuff them n-nice and full, like this here."

Seven A.M. At shift's end, Barry rides another green trolley downtown, along with sleep-hungry clerks and secretaries going to work in the dark. Already, the streets are choked with carbon-monoxide breathing cars and panel trucks advertising December hours, inching by beneath light standards decorated with huge green wreathes, red plastic ribbons, tinsel snowflakes and Santa Clauses. Instead of transferring across from the Bay and riding home against the flow of rush-hour traffic, Barry walks away from the crowded streets, to Prince's Island where he watches for the first grey signs of the sunrise still an hour away, and remembers Gloria here in the fall, and the daisies they found that went on blooming even after the first snowfall. But the valley's beauty is forbidding now. The sweet rotting smell of dead leaves in the water has been utterly cleansed by the snow.

The river is silent as Barry crosses the bridge. Its current runs swiftly as ever, but secretly, deep under the ice. He does not stop to look over the railing as he would if Gloria were with him, but the thought of her runs on beneath the surface of his work-dulled mind. She will be back in a week. Six days. Five. It will be a new beginning for them. She has said it herself: every beginning is beautiful.

He arrives home in the pre-dawn twilight, ready to sleep until suppertime, when it will be dark again. In this way the days are tricked into passing.

The routine is demanding, but it imposes an order of its own, so every minute of the day has its place in the great droning rhythm of work and sleep. Billions have given substance to their lives by such a rhythm, built not without sacrifice, on the ruins of billions of childish dreams. But in the end it is a trick not worth knowing. Time is never permanently deceived.

It gets its own back, even in sleep, which is restless, loud with the voices of the dying. He is on a bridge, a mail sack in his hand. Something in the sack is crying, struggling to get out. It may be a child, or a litter of kittens, he is afraid to look. He is ordered to throw the sack into the river. By whom? He looks up at his commander, but can see no face. 'Why?' he demands. 'Why am I doing this?'

Before any answer comes, Barry is awake, lying with his cheek against the cold pillow, looking at the sun rise over Jamaica, telling himself it was only a dream, wishing he could go back to sleep and forget it. But it is no use. There will be no more sleep until he has walked off the hours. Five hours before work again, with its measured, easy-to-kill time.

He finds the house uncommonly silent. There is no light on in the basement. Sid, apart from belittling Zak's work with the urban renewal communities and complaining about the others' laziness, has done little since finishing the new Insurgence but to wait to hear from his eastern and American contacts. On the kitchen table Barry finds a note from Zak and Margot. They have gone out for dinner and a show with their visitors from the States. Also a telephone message: the post office called to say he is not to come to work anymore. The Christmas rush is over. Relieved, Barry picks up the newspaper scattered across the common room floor, and pours a hot bath.

Two-hundred Viet Cong spotted near the Cambodian border today. After a rocket attack, American forces claim to have killed seventy-five (at a cost of $100,000 each). Barry thinks of phoning Gloria. He knows she will ask him again if he has found a new office for Insurgence, yet if he doesn't phone she will say he takes her for granted. But she knows he doesn't. Or, only as he takes Zak for granted, as he takes it for granted Zak will lend him his van, or come get him if he is stranded somewhere. Because they are friends. When you have a friend, you know you always have help. To be a friend is to be relied on, taken for granted. And if love isn't friendship magnified, what is he missing?

Love. It is another of those words debased by currency, like freedom and revolution. Manson's battle-cry was Love. In those heady days of last summer, the Co-op was going to be held together by it. Painting and renovating wasn't drudgery because it was for the Co-op. They knew there would be problems--oh yes, problems, no sweat--but the idea was so strong, nothing could split them.

But now, the Co-op is no family--everyone who can has left for the holidays, to be with their families--only a handful of people thrown together by circumstance and convenience. After one term of using the house as a crash- and landing-pad, this is what they have come to. And this drift, this aimless accommodating drift, is the hardest thing in the world to change. So, coasting through the days, they cheat time and themselves.

Though most of the Co-op members are out of town, Zak has filled the kitchen with Christmas treats. Barry finds a box of Mandarin oranges, a bag of nuts, a ring of figs and some bananas on the counter, and in the cupboards, cans of oysters, clam chowder, a foil-wrapped fruit cake from Zak's worrying mother in Oregon, cookies, candies, new cans added to the Co-op's collection of teas, even some holly from Vancouver Island, torn open by the post office and sent on in a plastic bag. The refrigerator is overstuffed with turkey, ham, herring, cheeses, coffee, wines, tomatoes, more oranges, apples, plums, pineapple, pear-shaped Chinese grapefruit, even strawberries (though where in the world are strawberries in season?). Such abundance shows that the world really is a village. Everyone ought to be able to eat this way, at least once a year. Yet today, with pictures of starving Biafran children on all the front pages, this glut of food is shameful. Barry understands now the tales of giants eating children. After a war: 'Where have all the children gone?' 'The warriors have eaten them.'

From the embarrassment of riches, Barry takes two eggs and a carton of milk, and makes an omelet. But since the eggs are cold it doesn't rise, and he loses his appetite when he sits down to eat alone. The plate he takes from the cupboard has a thin ridge of dried food stuck to it. ('Detergent,' Zak insists, 'pollutes rivers.') Barry pushes the spongy egg around with his fork, the long empty night stretching before him like a prison term, then puts his plate in the sink and peels an orange.

Several books lie half-read on the floor of his room upstairs. The world of ideas is as readily available to him as the world of food. But he has had too much solitude lately to appreciate either. Perhaps he should reconsider Gloria's invitation to visit her in the country. But he couldn't bear to keep up pretenses in front of her parents as he knows she would do.

He phones Ed Humboldt's house, listens to the phone ring a minute, then returns the receiver to its cradle. It's as well Humboldt isn't home. Marxist theology and South African brandy don't mix with Barry's restless mood. The professor's knowledge makes him cynical and cautious, a combination which Barry detests because both attitudes, at different times, tempt him. It is unthinkable for Humboldt to be associated with Insurgence (though he is willing to supply information in abundance). He hasn't got tenure yet. He'd have to be a fool, or worse . . .

Barry dials his father's number, but as he expects, there is no answer. Standing at the wall phone, his hand on the receiver, staring at the cardboard sheet covered with names and numbers, many of them scratched out or changed, he is startled by the ringing of the phone under his hand.

"Hello, Co-op."

"Barry! How the hell are you, man, Zak there?"

"He's out, Smoky. I'll tell him you called."

"Groovy. Listen man, how's your stash holding out?"

"Stash? I don't have one."

"Don't have one? Barry! It's Christmas! What turns you on? Acid? Hash? I got the best variety ever. Black Afghani, Algerian rapping hash, Yucatan siesta, Lebanese blond, Moroccan mirage, north Indian love hash, Nepalese sky-high . . . Pick your stone. What dya say?"

"This phone is bugged by the way, Smoky. Did you notice a funny click when I answered?"

"The hell it is. Who'd want to bug you?"

"Very funny."

"Aw, let them eat shit. What'll it be, Barry, the Afghani?"

"I'd rather not discuss it."

"They really got you freaked, huh? Well, fuck them. If they wanted to nail me to the wall, they'd of done it long ago . . . So where's the action, man? Who's over there?"

"Nobody. Just me."

"Well, for shit sake, Barry, hang in there. I'll be right over."

"O.K. But Smoky--"

The dial tone sounds, and again that click. Zak has said it must be a faulty phone. If they were really tapping your line, you would never know it. Even so, Smoky's call is disturbing. It is not like him to be so needlessly reckless. He comes to the house almost every day, and has never before phoned ahead.

Barry dials the number of Gloria's house, but as the long distance exchange is clicking quietly around, the door from the back stairway bursts open and red-haired Amy runs into the kitchen giggling hysterically. She cowers behind Barry, clinging to his shirt, still giggling, as a tall skinny girl he has never seen before races into the room screaming.

"All right you little cocksucker!" Barry hangs up the receiver, finding himself caught between the two girls. Amy clings to him, keeping between herself and the older girl, who grabs at her, scratching and crying, "I'll wring your dirty little neck." Catching hold of Amy's long hair, she pulls and grabs her shoulder, dragging the child from behind Barry.

The cord having become twisted around Amy, the phone receiver flies off the hook and strikes the floor. "Hold it!" Barry yells. "That's enough, let go." When Amy's tormenter keeps a tight grip on her shoulder, Barry grabs her wrist and yells, "I said let go!"

The girl wheels round at him, about to claw him, and he pushes her away. He is afraid she will fall against the oven, but she plants her bare feet firmly under her and pierces him with a cold look of hatred. Her hair stands out all over as if electrically charged. "Who the hell asked you?" The second she is diverted, Amy dashes through the door and upstairs. "Come back here, you slut!" Barry stands in front of the door, but the barefoot girl tears at him savagely with sharp ragged fingernails and slips by him. "Let go of me you filthy pervert!"

A game, Barry thinks, it must be. But what a game. Then, hearing Amy scream, he runs up the narrow, dingy-yellow stairwell. What if someone gets hurt? He couldn't say he was an innocent bystander.

The girls have vanished, but the screaming continues, and when he finds them in Margot's room, Amy is lying face down on the Persian rug while the bigger girl digs bony knees into her back and pulls her head back by the hair, twisting.

"Look at me you little whore!" she yells, though it would be impossible for Amy to look at her in that position.

Barry grabs the wild girl's arms from behind. "Let go," he shouts. "Get off her."

She bites fiercely into Barry's wrist. Standing, he throws his wounded arm around her waist and picks her up. But she kicks furiously and still clings to a handful of Amy's hair.

"Leave her alone!" Barry says, slipping his hands around her shoulders and trying to apply a full nelson. She continues to struggle, however, and he is afraid of hurting her. When Amy has pulled herself free, he releases his unequal opponent, who slumps to the floor holding her stomach.

She is overcome with laughter.

"You all right, Amy?" Lifting her face from her hands, Amy too laughs uncontrollably, tears of mirth in her eyes.

"Did you think that was for real?" Both girls collapse onto the couch, laughing at him. "Barry," Amy gasps, "you know Nevada, don't you? She's staying here tonight while our folks are out."

"Know him?" Nevada jerks her head back, tough-guy fashion. "Why, me and him, we're like that, aren't we Barry." She lays two fingers together, one on the other, and Amy giggles.

"That's right, we're pals," Barry says, feeling like a fool. "But this house has rules. Like no fighting. So cool it." He begins to back out of the room, trying to laugh with them, certain that if he turns his back on them he will be attacked again.

Nevada springs up, pushing the hair away from her face, and slips her arm into his. "Hey Barry," she whispers, standing on tiptoes, her hand to his ear. "Barry baby, do you know where I can score some acid?"

"Some what?"

His shock amuses her. "Acid!" she says, dropping the pretense of secrecy. "You know, LSD. I wanna get stoned, you dig? High, spaced out, zonked, wasted . . . Don't tell me you're straight?" She stands with her hands on her hips, blouse untucked, hair sticking out wildly, looking more a child than ever.

"If I did know where to get it," he says, "I wouldn't tell you."

Nevada acts insulted. "What a square! What a fucking zombie! Did you hear what the dude said?" she asks Amy, who has curled up on the couch with a knowing smile on her face. "What a dump this hick town is . . . Whatsa matter, think I'm too young or something? She zips up the fly of her jeans which has slipped down, tucks her thumbs in her belt loops, and sticks out her chest. "Come on," she dares him, "how old do you think I am anyway?"

Her face has a frightening hardness in it, and her long stick-like body could belong to an old woman, but Barry isn't lying when he answers, "Twelve. Thirteen maybe?"

"Huh, thirteen?" Her face can't hide the fact that she is shaken. "Huh . . . I'm sixteen for your information. Wanna see my I.D? I was in and out of reform school by the time I was thirteen." She struts back and forth in front of him, trying to regain her poise. "That fucking mother of mine, she's so ugly, she was scared I'd take her men away from her. She turned me in. Her own daughter!"

She pulls Barry by the arm out into the hall. "Listen, Barry," she says, her voice cracking with excitement. "I know you can get me that acid if you want to. I can pay, don't you worry. But maybe you want something else, huh? Look, we can get rid of that kid and--"

The phone rings downstairs, and to Barry's relief, the startled girl runs to answer it. Her proposition was so blunt, so horribly pure, that for a moment it froze him. He should have walked away long ago. But still he lingers in the hall, and looks into the room to see that Amy is all right.

"Don't pay any attention to her, Barry," she says, lounging on the couch with the Mexican blanket. "She's just putting you on."

Suddenly, Nevada races back, her face white. "Holy shit!" she squeals. "Quick, you gotta get out of here. They're on their way home!" Her cynical pose is completely gone. She stops Barry, holding his arms at his sides. "Wait a minute. Are my eyes bloodshot? Did you smell anything when you came up here? Amy! Get in that bed you little turd. I'm s'posed to be babysitting you . . . Now get out of here, Barry. You won't say a word about this, will you? Please . . . Oh, just a minute!" She skips out into the hall after him, throws her arms around his neck and kisses him, running her tongue along his lips quickly before he can pull away. "Now go!" And she runs back to the room, where he can see her picking things up off the floor as the door swings shut.

Barry descends the stairs slowly, hardly able to believe what he has allowed to happen. At thirteen--even at sixteen, though he is sure Nevada is lying about her age--he never thought of such things. Now, for the first time, he wonders if he belongs in the future. At twenty-one, he doesn't understand the younger generation at all.

## ELECTRONIC SURVEY I

Subject: Barry MacDonald (289-1871)

Transcript no.: 29

Date: 22.12.69

Time: 00:43:40

1. Co-op/

2. hi Margot/ it's me/ is Barry there/

1. sure is Gloria/ hang on/ I'll see if I can flag him down/

2. sounds like you're having a celebration there/

1. you said it/ Zak and I are moving out of the Co-op/

2. you're joking/

1. would I joke about a thing like that/ it took me ages to talk him into it/ we're getting a big old house not far from here/ it'll take a lot of fixing up/ but/ here's Barry/ talk to you later Gloria/ bye/

3. hi Gloria/ I meant to phone you tonight/

2. from the sound of things you're having a high time without me/

3. yeah/ this sort of blew up at the last minute/ did Margot tell you/

2. yes she did/ isn't that incredible news/

3. well/ you know/ Zak's had this idea for a long time/ of going out into the bush and pioneering/ getting people with different skills to pitch in together/ I guess it finally dawned on him/ he can do the same thing in the city/ live by his wits instead of his sweat/

2. oh I thought/ you mean it's going to be another co-op house/

3. that's the idea/ he's got big plans/ like an artists' studio for Margot and others/ with a kiln and all that/ eventually a printing

press/ and he's talking about starting a theatre group/ put on plays in the old fire hall/

2. but/ I mean/ I thought it was for Margot/ to give her some peace/ you know she's pregnant don't you/

3. pregnant/ no/ why those sneaky/

2. don't let them know I told you/ they must have their reasons/ happy birthday by the way/ before I forget/ oh/ I wish I were there with you/

3. country life too peaceful for you eh/

2. don't make me laugh/ the only time my mom gives me any peace is when I'm playing the piano/ she seems to think I've been away for years/ and of course/ she has to fill me in on all the stories/

3. well/ it won't be long now/

2. I wish you'd come visit me/ Andrea was here for a day or two/

3. so I heard/

2. what did you hear/

3. nothing much/ she said you made some clothes/ drank a lot of tea with your mother/

2. did she tell you she's moving out of the Co-op too/

3. oh yeah/ I knew that before she left/ she's getting one of those apartments on Seventeenth Avenue/ her father owns a block of them or something/

2. that's right/ she said she just couldn't stand the Co-op anymore/

3. didn't give it much of a chance/ did she/ four months/ considering how keen she was to get it started/

2. she asked me/ if I wanted to share an apartment with her/

3. // and what did you tell her/

2. I said I'd/ think about it/ but Barry/ it's not that I want to stop seeing you/ but/

3. I know/ crowds make you nervous/

2. I couldn't live with Insurgence in the house/ Barry/

3. I guess Andrea'd make a better roomate than me/ at least/ from your mother's point of view/

2. that's not it/ if you/ if you'd move out of there we could get a little place/ just the two of us/

3. or if the paper moved out/

2. oh Barry/ it's not only that/ I don't think I'm the co-op type/

3. seems nobody is/ Andrea/ Zak buying his own house/

2. buying/ where'd he get the money/

3. he says he has a pipeline of the stuff/ must be the only pipeline flowing north/

2. what about you then/ if all your friends are moving out/

3. that gives me a chance to try again/ get some serious people in/

2. like Sid/ I suppose/

3. oh no/ he's too right all the time to co-operate/ besides/ I don't know how long he'll be sticking around/ Calgary's too bush league for his liking/ no/ I'll find some people/

2. but why Barry/ it seems like everything's breaking up/ maybe the Co-op will never work/ wouldn't it be simpler if we found a place of our own and/

3. I can't just give up Gloria/ who ever got anywhere that way/ won't you try once more/

2. I/ can't/ I/ I do love you Barry/ but/ I'm sorry/

3. oh don't be sorry/ you're the one you have to please/ not me/

2. I'm so/ well/ I have to go now/ you'll phone me won't you/ soon/

3. sure sure/ good night/

2. and we'll see each other/ I'll have you over for supper and/

3. good night Gloria/

2. good night/

Time: 00:49:14

Date: 22.12.69

From: Dormouse

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

Shortlist of Proposed Courses of Action

1. Continued surveillance, with the objective of identifying as many as possible of the subject's subversive contacts. Due to the volatile situation, this course may prove overly cautious.

2. Operation Trapdoor. The subject has been described as equivocal on the use of revolutionary violence. However, his comrades in the 'Park' group have recently declared their militancy openly. The subject may, therefore, be induced to commit himself regarding Operation Trapdoor. This would remove him from the scene, and also have an inhibiting effect on other subversion throughout the region.

3. Operation Backhand. With the assurance of Dormouse AC7, we may be confident of the subject's conviction for possession of any amount of cannabis deemed desirable. Such an action, while lacking the inhibitory effect of Operation Trapdoor, would effectively remove the subject from the scene, and would be an adequate compromise if Operation Trapdoor fails or is unacceptible.

Date: 22.12.69

From: Dormouse AC5

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Further to Dormouse AC1's shortlist re the subject:

2. In this agent's judgment, it is unwise to attempt Operation Trapdoor with this subject. None of the data suggest the subject would agree to participate, and the attempt would be certain to arouse his suspicion.

3. An abundance of evidence now contradicts the view--to which AC1 clings tenaciously--that the Park group and the Mall group are in any sense "comrades". To continue to regard them as such may lead to grave errors.

4. Despite Elephant's explicit directives to the contrary, AC1 continues to employ Dormouse AC7, whom he regards as his protege.

5. N.B. Holiday season drinking has accentuated AC1's eccentric behavior. He has become overtly aggressive toward certain of his subordinates, and indulges the dangerous fantasy that his position is one of military command. It is imperative that this situation be resolved without delay.

Date: 23.12.69

From: Elephant

To: Dormouse

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Acknowledge shortlist re subject dated 22.12.69.

2. Until further directives are received, continue surveillance at present level.

3. Under no circumstance is the subject to be approached regarding Operation Trapdoor (ref. Shortlist para. 2).

4. Operation Backhand will be reserved as an option (ref. Shortlist para. 3). However, it is to be employed only in extreme circumstances, and on explicit instructions from Elephant.

5. Dormouse has been delinquent in continuing to rely upon Dormouse AC7 in this case (ref. Shortlist para. 3). Such direct contravention of an important directive must perforce be reported to Leo.

6. Under no circumstances is AC7 to be employed for any duties whatsoever.

7. AC7's security clearance has been returned Negative. He is wanted on criminal charges in the U.S.A. and is subject to extradition upon receipt of a request from American authorities.

Date: 27.12.69

From: Dormouse

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald

1. Acknowledge directives re subject dated 23.12.69.

2. N.B. Dormouse AC7 has revealed the existence of "extreme circumstances" (ref. 24.12.69 para. 4) sooner than can have been predicted.

3. Full details to follow. At present, it is known only that the members of Insurgence are plotting against the life and livelihood of one or more prominent local figures.

4. Request permission to commence Operation Backhand immediately.

5. Due to the gravity of the situation and the danger of possible delays, I have taken personal responsibility and issued the Backhand order on my own authority.

27 December

Tom,

I'm sorry if my last letter put a damper on things for you. Don't let it make you stop writing. I'm certainly not the person to criticize your choices or make fun of your enthusiasms. The Jamaicans have made fine musical instruments out of oil drums. Who can say that people won't do as well with computers? In ten years' time I'd like to see a computer terminal built into every television, turning it into a voting machine. Then the facade of representative democracy will be swept away, and we'll have direct democracy. The country will be governed by a committee of the whole, and for smaller-scale decisions there'll be twenty committees of a million people each and a million committees of twenty people each.

But there I go again, imagining I can change the world with a snap of my fingers. I've been sitting on the sidelines all my life, taking the long view, seeing the world reduced to the size of a TV screen, and thinking there's a solution for every 'problem' (and that everything can be reduced to a problem). Well, I finally have to admit: I don't have any solutions. I can't keep the world at arm's length anymore. It's a sickness--the Canadian disease--it saps your drive, makes you think your talk-talk-talk has got you somewhere, then leaves you right where you started, and out of steam.

What I need is to find my centre--Gloria has helped me this far; if I have any sense I won't let her get away--to find that dynamo inside me that has to go all out in one direction, and follow it where it takes me.

Zak has shown one direction it might go: into one of the million committees. The puzzle is, why do we have to rely on outsiders to show us what is possible? Zak has bought one of the old houses in this neighborhood that are threatened by developers, and he plans to fight them. If I can't organize the students of the world to strike for peace, I might, just might, be able to organize my own block to stop the bulldozers and highrises. Part of the long view you adopt on the sidelines is the notion that what happens on your own block isn't important. But if it doesn't matter to you, who does it matter to?

We've been trying to push Insurgence in this direction, to make it a vehicle the city's co-ops can use to share ideas and experiences. We're finding out we don't have to be so isolated. There are other people who want to change the way they live, and who are doing things to overcome their powerlessness.

Sid, though, can't understand us. He thinks we're trivializing the paper. If we're not out to dismantle monopoly capitalism, then we're copping out. He says Calgary can't support a really radical journal, because all the big stories are happening elsewhere. He is so far-sighted he can't even see the wall he is beating his head against . . . (More later.)

I was interrupted just now by a phone call: Smoky's in jail again, this time for possession for purposes of trafficking. He doesn't have much chance of getting off (he was becoming much too reckless), and will face one of those outrageous sentences of two to five years (same as for manslaughter). Sid, naturally, claims he was busted because he works for Insurgence, and that it's all part of a plot to destroy us. That is nonsense, but needless to say, we're cleaning up our act around here.

Later

A chinook has been followed by more cold weather, and the city is obscured by a fog that hasn't lifted all day. I walk west along the riverbank, thinking of the past year--of the hours lost and wasted, of the things not said, or said and regretted, of the nights staying up with you and the afternoons in bed with Gloria; all these things that may not come again--and of the next unpredictable year. I walk and walk though the snow is too deep, and end up standing perfectly still in an unmarked field of snow, unable to go forward, unwilling to go back, and I listen to the silence that has nothing and everything to tell me, until the snow melts into my boots and my fingers go numb and my head starts ringing. It's time, it's time, the clockwork wears itself out in my mind, it's time, and I don't know what it's time for, only that it's time to start doing whatever it is I have to do . . .

These days between Christmas and the New Year are days out-of-time, not included in the old calendars, not part of any year. The time when all time comes together, the doors of heaven and hell swing open, and the spirits of the dead swarm freely over this world seeking vengeance or vindication. For this time out-of-time all laws are suspended, all promises forgotten, all sanity and order undone. And if hell won't come to earth of its own accord, the B52's are sent out like angels of death to make certain it comes all the same.

I had a dream last night so horrific that I forced myself to wake up, but still I couldn't shake the horror. It hasn't left me. It was Christmas and all the bombs ever dropped on Dresden and London were being dropped each day on Hanoi and Haiphong, and as many again each night. There were children hiding under my bed and screaming, screaming even in their sleep, and I knew that some of them had already gone deaf. But somehow I wasn't there with them. I heard the bombs only as if far away, while over the screaming of the children I heard an announcer's voice saying that Nixon was being awarded the Nobel peace prize and a treaty would be signed any day, but in the meantime the air was searing and children were running through the streets screaming, some bleeding from the ears, some with arms missing, one with no feet running on the stumps of her legs. Yet I saw no blood. The image was black-and-white, and though the crying went on without let-up till I awoke, I felt somehow far away from it all. I didn't try to help. The noise of the bombs was never loud enough to drown out the crying, or to silence the announcer's news of the making and breaking of brilliant careers.

There must be a ray of light somewhere, some good. Yet my dream had none. Only the ugliness of death, the futility of it, the foulness of the human animal and the human intellect that inflict it again and again and again. What is my dream trying to tell me? That the decency I've always known is a façade? That I have to look hard at that dark truth? That I should stop trying to deny it or embellish it? Or that I'm too far away? That I haven't let it really touch me?

It's only close up, where I run the risk of getting hurt, that I have a hope of doing anything constructive. I'm sick of standing on the sidelines. It's time to get into the game. Time I learned the rules, so I know what I can do. I was planning to skip the country, Tom, to go live in France for awhile. But that would be only another sideline. This is the only place I really know, and can commit myself to, the only place I can hope to improve. And if I stick with it, if I'm serious and don't keep changing course, I think I can.

How about you, Tom? What can you do where you are? Have you given it any thought?

Peace and love,

Barry

Date: 28.12.69

From: Dormouse AC5

To: Elephant

Subject: Barry MacDonald, Sid Hansen, David Zachariason et. al.

1. Thanks to Elephant's emergency call to my home, Dormouse has been spared embarrassing and possibly dangerous disclosures, which certainly would have resulted from a premature operation against the subjects such as that planned by Dormouse AC1.

2. Notification came too late for me to rescind AC1's Operation Backhand order. However, I was able to intercept the narcotics officers prior to their arrival at the Bow Shelter Co-op, and redirect them to the home of Dormouse AC7, where they apprehended AC7 and found sufficient quantities of proscribed substances to justify any irregularities in the case.

3. Having interrogated AC7 closely, I am satisfied that the lives of no prominent figures are threatened. The report of "extreme circumstances" appears to have been a fabrication or delusion of AC1's, encouraged by AC7.

4. Surveillance of the *Insurgence* group will be given top priority until this judgment can be either confirmed or contradicted.

5. Dormouse AC7 is being held for further questioning by Elephant. He declares himself willing to co-operate in any way in order to avoid extradition to the United States.

6. When contacted and informed of what had transpired, Dormouse AC1 was in a state of intoxication, and reacted irrationally. He accused me personally of underestimating the gravity of the present

political situation, of consistently thwarting his efforts, and of attempting to usurp his position.

7. Growing increasingly despondent, he blamed myself, AC7, and the "defection" of AC2 for his "downfall". After he revealed that he carried a hand gun, and threatened suicide, I disarmed him at the earliest possible moment and had him admitted to hospital.

8. I recommend that Dormouse AC1 be examined by an Elephant psychiatrist as soon as possible.

Date: 30.12.69

From: Leo

To: Dormouse

Subject: Dormouse AC1

1. Be notified that the subject is forthwith relieved of all his duties. After six months' mental health leave, AC1 is to be transferred to Elephant central office.

2. All operations in the Calgary office are to be suspended immediately, pending the arrival of the subject's replacement, Elephant NC140 (formerly known as Dormouse AC2).

3. Effective 1.1.70, all Calgary operations are to be administered directly by Elephant through Elephant NC140.

4. Dormouse's Calgary files are to be transferred to Elephant's central registry in all due haste.

## THE LAST DAY OF THE 1960's

EEEEeeeeeeee. Hidden from the streets by low cloud cover, a turbo-prop is descending slowly toward the airport. Its falling wail rebounds from the red-brick walls of the city. Sound and echo swirl around the gigantic Family of Man statues in the square as if they are crying out, reaching for one another with emaciated iron arms. Barry cups his hand around the flame of his paraffin candle, both for warmth and to protect it from the wind. With two dozen others, hands also cupped around wavering yellow candle flames, he shuffles north and south, up and down the sidewalk in front of the faceless giant statues. The city core east of Centre Street is a closed room, sound walled in by the York and Imperial, between the sandstone City Hall and the white-painted tenements of Chinatown. The ceiling of cloud reflects and diffuses the red green yellow blue lights beneath.

Candles. The Family of Man. New Year's Eve. The vigil is no more than this. There are no speeches, no songs but the one Reverend Cameron is humming as he walks: "We Shall Overcome". A few students hum under their breath, but tonight the battle hymn sounds like a dirge. No one voices the words, because they are untrue. Nothing will be overcome by their standing this lonely vigil awhile, then rushing indoors to get warm. We will persevere, perhaps, we will witness, we will not be accomplices, we will light a candle on New Year's Eve. But how will we ever begin to overcome?

The small turnout is not the problem. The missing faces--the Humboldts and Mrs. MacIntyres--would add nothing but confusion to a gesture which is already complete. But what can ever be overcome by a gesture? Barry turns beside the cardboard box in which the last stack of pink blue and white papers lies. History of the War. Seven-Point Program. Canadian Inputs. When will he see the last of them? Any left over tonight, drop them from an airplane over Calgary. If paper could smother the fires of war, then he'd gladly bury the world knee-deep in it.

Circling slowly with his candle, Barry searches the faces of the passing demonstrators for answers. Many of these people have not seen each other for a few weeks, and there is an excitement in them, a sense of beginning and renewal. But the conversations are all personal. They are excited about their new courses, and the good skiing weather. Vietnam is ten thousand miles away.

Gloria approaches, holding her candle between new red woolen mittens, a red tam on her head. She winks, making Barry break into a smile. Then she has passed, and he smiles at Andrea, then Zak. Affection pounds in his chest, a love that needs to include them all. But the question recurs--how to begin to overcome?--and no number of smiles can answer it.

Much too soon, the others stop marching and huddle on the sidewalk, lighting cigarettes from their candle flames. Bow colleagues, ex-newspaper staffers, CADREs talking about what they would be doing back home tonight: all have New Year's Eve parties to go to later. Barry feels they ought to stand here until midnight or until the bombs stop dropping. But the wind is rising, some of the candles have flickered out. There is no sense in freezing their feet on this pavement. It makes no difference in Vietnam how long the candles burn in Calgary.

Gloria kneels on the sidewalk, packing snow around the base of her candle to make it stand. Her red woolen hat is worn at an angle, like Barry's white one. Her expression has changed in her absence. She looks older, perhaps, more distant. For the few minutes he was with her this afternoon, helping her father carry furniture from the farm truck into her new apartment, she acted cheerfully non-committal, as if Barry were just a friend. Even now, as he stoops beside her to plant his candle in the snow, she is aloof, filling the silence with a remark about the statues.

"I don't like their hair," she says. "The men don't have hair; why should the women?" That is what has changed: her hair. It no longer falls over her shoulders, but curls around her ears. "You finally noticed?" Her smile, too, has changed, become more straight-lipped, more reserved.

She looks away from him quickly, and gazes at the monuments. "Do you think they're supposed to be dancing?" Barry shakes his head. They can't be. Their iron feet are flattened under an oppressive weight. The skeletal forms are frozen in defeat.

Overhead, another airplane moans, invisible. The sound falls and is muffled, along with the rumble of tires on snow. Following Gloria's example, Reverend Cameron and his listeners have lined up their wax homunculi along the sidewalk, to stand attention for them until the New Year. The CADREs, burying hands and snuffed candles in coat pockets, begin heading for their cars. A pair of dragsters scream past, their horns blaring, sucking a wind behind them that blows out most of the candles.

Gloria has begun talking about upcoming concerts and her new semester. Barry says something about enrolling in the school of hard knocks which makes her laugh, but he still feels she is watching him more critically than ever before. How much is an act? Will she ever again let him touch her closely?

While Barry kneels to close the box containing the leaflets and extra candles, Reverend Cameron comes over to take his leave. He is short-winded in the cold, and rubs his calfskin gloves together. "Was it a good year for you, Barry?"

"I'm looking forward to a better."

"You wait and see. There'll be peace, I know it." Cameron speaks with the authority of faith.

Gloria laughs, shaking the minister's hand in her turn. A knowing, gently taunting laugh. "Barry wouldn't know what to do with himself if there were no war to fight. Would you Barry? What would you be against then?"

He returns her sly, appraising smile without answering, until Cameron, feeling excluded, breaks the silence. "He'd still be *for* the the same things, wouldn't you Barry . . . I know we disagree on many things, but at least we both have beliefs. Right?" Barry nods, still looking at Gloria, and Cameron, repeating his good-night's, returns to his friends.

Zak, without ceasing to talk to the remaining circle of people on the sidewalk, looks over at Barry and jerks his head in the direction of the parked van. As they leave the site of the war's quietest protest, all the candles have already been blown out by the wind.

A parade of cars passes on the street, revellers shouting out the windows. Gloria ignores them, talking about the new place she and Andrea are sharing. "She has so many clothes I can't believe it. I only wish I were her size."

Barry quickens his pace, hoping to catch up to Zak. Just ahead of them on the sidewalk, there is a slight disturbance as a drunk stumbles out the door of a dining lounge and bumps into Zak.

"Watch your step, Pops," he says. "There you go."

The short, balding man staggers backward against a light standard, and leans there in a posture that sickens Barry with a vertiginous sense of _dejà vu_. The light reflected from the grey scalp, the sagging padded shoulders of the crumpled suit the old man is searching for matches, the cigarette dangling from his lips: Barry sees his father exactly as he was one night three years ago, when he leaned against the iron railing in front of their house, unable to find his way inside.

"Got a light?" the old man grumbles without looking up. Barry puts a matchbook in the outstretched hand, and stops under the light while his father fumbles with it. Gloria waits impatiently, but when Barry hands her the box of papers and tells her to go on without him, she hurries after the others looking more amused than annoyed by Barry's interest in the derelict.

Mack MacDonald pockets the matchbook, and looks at Barry for the first time, squinting as if swimming up from deep water toward consciousness. Beaming with a red-faced smile, he shakes his son's shoulder. But, instead of saying anything, he takes the cigarette out of his mouth, sees that it has gone out, and stands looking at it. Barry is about to speak when the door of the lounge bursts open, slamming against the hotel's brick wall, and a huge man in a three-piece suit rushes at Mack.

"I told you to get out of here. Now push off!" With sudden agility, Barry's father darts around the lamp standard, and from a safe distance, he hollers something horrible, a hoarse raving curse which Barry can't make out. Returning to the door, the bouncer yells at Barry, "Get him away from here. Now!"

Emboldened by the closed door, Mack steps back onto the sidewalk, shouting, "My friends're in there. Who the 'ell you think you're talkin' to?"

Come on," Barry says, putting his arm around his father's waist. "We don't like the service in this dump, we'll drink somewhere else." His father's weight sags onto Barry's shoulder, even as the old man continues to yell, and he shakes his fist at a kid who shouts out the window of a passing car.

Together, father and son weave down the sidewalk toward the corner where Zak and the others stand waiting. Barry waves them on. He has to get Mack home to bed--he is hanging onto his son like a drowning man now, barely moving his feet--but knows the old man could never be induced to get into Zak's wildly-painted van.

"Le's go in here," Mack groans out of his torpor as they pass another lounge.

"I know a better place." Barry shifts his shoulder under Mack's arm, and they cross at the walk light. He knows his father has a room a few blocks from here. Perhaps he won't notice where he is being led.

Mack's suit coat hangs open, and as they walk a long white shirttail works free of his belt. Breathing heavily from his effort, Barry asks, "Don't you have an overcoat?"

Mack sniffs and rouses himself. "Good Christ! My coat's back there, the bastard. Gotta get it, I tell ya." He pulls away from Barry and starts back the way they came. Then he stops, looking around bewildered. They have reached the tree-lined streets north of Fourth Avenue. "Nowheres t'drink around here!"

"I'm taking you home," Barry explains. "You don't have a coat."

"Hell wi'ya," Mack hollers. "Don'shoo tush me. Get! What's at home enaways?"

"I've got a bottle," Barry tells him.

"A bottle! Where? Le's see."

"I mean, I can phone for one. Let's get you inside before you catch pneumonia."

Lapsing into a blank stare, the old man lets Barry lead him, mumbling, "Cant, son, jus' can't, don'shoo see? This ain't a way home."

Barry has carried his father another half-block before he understands that Mack has moved since the summer. Through his alcoholic daze, the old man recites an address near the Stampede Grounds, over a mile away.

Exhausted, Barry looks desperately up and down the dark street. The nearest warm place to sit down is a cafe two blocks away, and chances are it isn't open. Then, as if by a miracle, the headlights of a car appear at the corner, and a taxi pulls up in front of a house across the street from them. As the passengers get out and pay the driver, Barry bundles his father into the back seat, pushing the dead weight across the vinyl upholstery, and climbs in himself. The cabbie protests listlessly. He has a fare to pick up.

"It's all right," Barry says. "It's not far, and we're big tippers. Now, what's that address again?"

Slumped across the seat, Mack MacDonald mutters what sounds like a curse, then, his head back, mouth open, he falls asleep. Barry shakes him. "Your house; what's the address?" But he cannot rouse the old man. The driver complains, so Barry tells him to drive to the Co-op. Andrea's room is still empty. Mack can sleep there and find his own way home in the morning.

The narrow street is lined with cars, and the Co-op house is brightly lit when the cab pulls up outside it. The noise of electric guitars can be heard even before Barry opens the car door. With the cabbie pushing from the other side, he wrestles his father onto the curb and throws an arm around his back. Waking just enough to get his feet moving, Mack mumbles. "Wha's'is? Wha's'is place?"

"We're going to a party, Dad," Barry says, and presses a five-dollar bill into the driver's hand. "You'll like it here."

He manages to usher Mack straight up the stairs, ignoring the shouted greetings of revellers. Two figures are struggling on the bed in Andrea's darkened room, so Barry backs out and hauls his father up to his own room on the top floor. He pulls the blanket to the bottom of the bed, ready to tuck the old man in safe and sound.

But the noise from downstairs has wakened Mack. Grasping his son's arm like a lifebuoy, he pulls himself up to sit on the bed. "Where's'at drink, boy?" he mutters.

"I'll go get it," Barry tells him. "Scotch? Stay where you are. I'll be right back."

He meets Gloria on her way up the stairs, and throws his arms around her, kissing her desperately. He is overwhelmed by a longing for her that can't be satisfied, even with her in his arms.

"Are you drunk?" she says, pulling away. "Who is that old guy?"

"He needs help. He could freeze to death out there. Does it matter who he is?"

"Of course it matters," she says, then shakes her head and hugs him, but without passion, as if to console him.

"Hey, it's not midnight yet, you two!" Sid stands at the bottom of the stairs, raising his glass to them. "No sneaking off till after midnight."

Barry hurries downstairs, afraid his father will come looking for his drink. "Any Scotch in the kitchen?"

"Probably. Hey MacDonald, don't run away," Sid shouts, slapping Barry's shoulder like a buddie. "Guess you're the last to know. I meant to tell you first." He winks, squeezing Barry's shoulder so he can't get away. "As of next issue, you and Zak can do anything you damn well please with your newspaper. You can advertise the garage sales, protest about the garbage pick-up, any of those thrilling things. Anything except call it Insurgence."

Barry smiles. "You finally decided to pack it in, Sid?"

Sid empties his glass, laughing. "Pack it in? Man, I'm packing it up. Graduating. Finally hitting the big time. You'll be reading Insurgence under a Vancouver dateline before spring."

"Great! I mean, good for you, Sid. Guess we sort of outgrew each other."

"Put it that way if it makes you feel better." Sid releases Barry at last. "You got your own little niche here. Notice I didn't say bitch." He smiles at Gloria with something closer to friendliness than Barry remembers seeing between them. "You don't need the revolution no more, so why bother faking it, eh Barry?"

"Yeah, right Sid. What I really need is a drink." Barry slaps Sid's shoulder--"Good luck, eh?"--and hurries into the kitchen. He pours Johnny Walker into two tumblers, and starts back across the circle of people passing joints, toward the front stairs.

Gloria joins him again at the bottom of the stairs. "So Sid's headed for bigger things," he says. "Will you think of moving back to the Co-op?" She shakes her head slowly, lowering her eyes. "With your own room?"

She shakes her head more firmly. "I'd rather keep my distance," she says, her eyes still averted. "I mean, I'll have more freedom in the new place. There'll be less chaos, less chance of things happening that I don't want to be involved in. This house is getting notorious, you know."

"But everybody's moving out. There'll be a chance for a fresh start." He would like to touch her, lift her chin so she has to look at him.

"I wish you were moving out too." Her voice is heavy with regret.

Barry puts his arm around her, but, hearing a loud voice that he thinks is his father's, he breaks away, spilling a little whiskey on her, and starts up the stairs. "I'll be back."

Barry stands in the door of the bedroom and watches his father sleep, sitting on the bed, slumped against the wall, his neck twisted, looking like a corpse thrown into that position by the impact of a bomb. He could probably sleep like that, snoring quietly, until morning, with no worse consequences than a stiff neck and back. But Barry can't leave him like this. Setting the two glasses on a chair, he begins to shift the old man into a lying position. The heavy, lifeless body, the stinking grey skin nauseates Barry. The horrible waste of a life stretching indefinitely into the future without change oppresses him. It would be easier to cope with a physical maiming than with this slow death.

The moment Mack's head touches the pillow, he jerks up. "Wha's'at? Hm? Who?" He pushes Barry's helping hands away and sits up. "Where's that drink? You get it?"

"Here it is. Scotch, no ice, the way you like it." Barry sits on the chair facing the bed.

His father grips the glass tightly and downs half the drink in one swallow. "Ah, tha'sh good." He eases himself back against the wall. "Wha's'is place?"

"I live here."

"Ah." Mack slouches impassively, his face sagging into a blank whiskey stare. "Jeshush Chrish, son, you don' know how gawdam lucky you are, know 'at?" He jerks his drooping head up and throws his gaze toward Barry, who nods, waiting quietly. "I was your age, boy, I had nothin'. It was slave or starve. Know what I mean? . . . When I think of all a losh dreams . . ." He stares blindly at the Jamaican sun on the wall. "But you!" He swears angrily, tossing back the rest of his whiskey. "You don' know your ash from a hole in a ground. I could jush cry cush a whole worl's got her legs open fur ya an' you're jush shittin'ere, jush shittin' ere . . ."

As he slurs his last words, Mack slumps onto the pillow, and lies wheezing. When he seems to be asleep, Barry stands up and carefully pulls the blanket over his father. He turns to find Gloria standing in the doorway, the light at her back, watching.

"You really are a good man." Her voice is solemn, as if she were speaking at his funeral.

The old man on the bed heaves suddenly and coughs, a hacking cough that wakes him momentarily. His eyelids flicker open, then droop, half-closed, and he pulls the blanket around him. "Barry," he calls out, frightened. "You see your mother, boy? You see her, Chrishmas?"

Barry whispers, "I talked to her on the phone. She's fine."

"You oughta see her, boy. You oughta shee her. She loves ya, boy, you know that?"

Barry nods. "Yes. I know." In a moment, Mack is snoring quietly. He coughs in his sleep again, but doesn't wake. Barry slips from the room and stands next to Gloria, hardly daring to look at her.

"Your father?" she whispers, an unbearable note of pity in her voice. "Oh, Barry." She puts her arms around him, pressing close now as if she can love him only if she thinks she is easing his suffering.

At the sound of Mack's cough, Barry stiffens and looks back into the room. "Go on downstairs," he tells Gloria. "I'll be there as soon as I'm sure he's asleep."

He sits by the bed a few minutes longer, listening to the sounds of the party below. He has nothing to celebrate tonight, but it seems he is given no choice. The whole world, in spite of everything, is determined to celebrate, and will tolerate no protest.

When Mack is sleeping peacefully, curled into a ball, Barry pulls the door shut and returns to the party, his whiskey hardly touched in his hand. Descending the stairs, sober, into the dark, smoky atmosphere of frenetic rock'n'roll, he feels like an alien, an observer at a bizarre ritual. The windows shiver with the pile-driving beat of the music. The rooms are packed with people talking at what seems double speed, and eating the snacks that litter every available ledge and table. Laughter breaks out all around him, all of it incomprehensible to him. He sips his whiskey, but doesn't like the taste. By now he is so far behind the others that he could never be more than an observer of their frenzy.

He spots Gloria in the common room, dancing. He can't see who is her partner, or if she has one. She is dancing by herself, with everyone in the room. You can't enter the room without becoming part of the dance. He watches her a moment, but she is totally self-possessed and doesn't notice him.

"Barry!" Zak shouts behind him. "Where you been?" He is wearing a loose flowing white robe which makes him look like the pregnant one.

"Zak! So you're a family man now. Congratulations! Did you think you could keep it a secret?"

Startled, Zak says, "How did you find out?"

"Your whole life'll change now, eh?"

"Maybe. Maybe it needs a change."

"Say Zak, can I borrow the keys to your van? You can see I'm sober."

"Disgustingly. Where you going? It's almost midnight you know."

"I'll be back."

The cold night air is refreshing, and as Barry drives away from the noise of the house, he feels a weight being lifted from him. He has realized, while watching the dancers, where he would rather be. If he can see the titanic Family of Man statues again, things may begin to come clear for him. Perhaps this time he will be able to see them dancing.

The streets are far from deserted at ten minutes to midnight. Cars pass him, their horns blaring, then slow down so the people inside can wave to him and blow kisses. People racing from one party to another, people taking their party into the street, people with nowhere to go, cruising in their cars to be with someone at midnight.

Barry ignores the No Parking signs and stops in front of the square where the statues stand, their gestures of friendship, trust, sorrow and despair unchanged since earlier in the evening. Two of the candles are still in the snow by the sidewalk, and, finding the cardboard box in the back of the van, Barry brings a few more with him.

As he stands looking up at the faceless human figures, the sounds of traffic and the blaring of horns reaching him from an area of many blocks around, his breathing becomes labored, the blood pounds through his head. He feels as if he is looking down at himself from the height of the statues. Or higher. He imagines the sky clear and depthless, not closed in as it is now. He sees the dark outline of this continent against the moonlit glow of the oceans, the line of daybreak skirting Japan and the China Sea, the glint of sunlight from the other side of the world reflected from the steel fuselages of bombers flying in the first light of the 1970's. The howl of a reveller in a passing car brings back to him his dream of the crying children, and he hears those cries as if they are coming from the iron child, the iron men and women in the centre of Calgary.

There was no peace in the sixties, but the idea was heard, the hope was voiced. If hope is powerless, then there will be no peace in the seventies or the eighties or nineties. But he can't believe that hope is powerless, or that words are meaningless, or that love is helpless.

Barry glances at the clock tower on the City Hall. It is a minute or two before midnight. He plants the remaining paraffin candles in a row on the sidewalk and reaches for the matches he had in his pocket. They are gone. He gave them to his father. Returning to the van, he reaches into the cardboard box, but can find no matches. There are no matches in the glove compartment either, nor on the ledge by the ashtray. However, he finds a half-empty matchbook on the dashboard, and hurries with them back to his row of candles, thinking against all reason that they must be burning at midnight.

The matches have been damp. The first fizzles. The second lights but is blown out by the wind before he can bring it to the first candle. By the time he has tried all the matches, the two candles he has managed to light have blown out.

He has caught the curiosity of one of the derelicts who haunt these streets day and night, summer and winter. "Got a match?" Barry says, as the bell on the clock tower rings for the first time.

"Wha'dya want a match for?" the man answers. He is an Indian, with a nearly empty mickey of booze in his hand. His jacket hangs open and Barry can see cigarette tobacco sticking out of his shirt pocket.

"I want to light these candles. Now please, can I have a match?"

"Wha'dya want to light them candles for?"

"Look, you can have them all when I'm through. But please, do you have a match?"

"Yeah, sure, I got lots of matches." The Indian fumbles in his shirt pocket. The bell has rung six or seven times now, maybe more.

"Thanks. Now could you kind of stand in front of me, shelter me a bit from the wind?"

"Huh?"

"Never mind." He strikes a match, and the Indian leans over him, watching. Barry lights two candles, strikes another match and lights a third. The clock tower bell rings for the last time, and Barry stands up, watching as, one by one, the candles wink out.

The Indian scratches his pockmarked chin, looking puzzled. "That was kind of pretty," he says, and offers Barry his mickey. "Have a drink?"

The bottle has no label on it. It occurs to Barry that its contents might be revolting, or even dangerous. But having lit the candles with some last minute help, he feels an amazing relief rush through him--an exhilaration--and affection for the stranger on the sidewalk beside him.

"Thanks," he says, putting the bottle to his lips. "Thanks a lot."